A Study of the Stress Factors and Coping Strategies of Japanese Students in UK Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the stress factors and coping strategies of Japanese students in UK Higher Education Institutions. It is believed that this is the first time that this specific but wide research with Japanese students has been attempted.

The first five chapters provide a range of background information and relevant considerations in preparation for the actual investigation. This involved investigation of a possible conceptual framework for examining stress and coping strategies with evidence being sought from previous research. Statistical, historical and literary information about previous overseas study by Japanese and other international students was also considered.

A preliminary survey was carried out with 35 Japanese students and this provided valuable information especially for the design of a questionnaire for the main survey, which obtained answers from 285 Japanese students about the types and degree levels of various stress factors, as well as the types of coping strategies adopted in specific situations. Other indicators of their experiences were sought from answers about advice to future Japanese students and to the staff of UKHEIs.

Examinations or coursework in English, oral presentations, participation in group or class discussion and worry about obtaining good assessments were common experiences causing the most severe stress to Japanese students.

Follow-up interviews were carried out with 27 respondents to seek mainly qualitative data which helped in gaining a better understanding of how time-related stress factors affected individual students, who all drew a graph showing the levels of their stressful experiences throughout their entire study period.

Although Japanese students were found to have experienced a wide range of stressful situations, their coping strategies were generally positive and overall they reported a high level of satisfaction with their time spent in UKHEIs.

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I have been very fortunate throughout this research in receiving valuable help, clear guidance and constant encouragement from my three supervisors, Maggie Wilson, Janet Harland and Mary Anne Ansell. I would also like to thank Perry Hinton for advising me about my statistical methods of analysis.

I am also grateful to Keith Smith who helped me with the proof reading of my drafts and my daughter Emi, who has encouraged me at all times.

I was also greatly encouraged by the interest shown and comments made when I presented some of the findings from this research to seven conferences or study groups of research students and teachers in England, Scotland and Japan.

This research would not have been possible without the willing participation of all the Japanese students who helped in the survey and interviews. Their keen interest and support has been an important factor in fulfilling my long held desire to carry out this research.

Prologue

Doing a PhD was my long-held dream. I was fortunate in having parents who believed strongly in the importance of education. My dream started in 1972 when I completed my first Master of Arts degree, in English Language and Literature, at Tsuda College, Japan, a women's college founded by Ume Tsuda, one of the first five female Japanese 'international students' who went to the USA to study in 1871 as part of the famous Iwakura Mission. (See Chapter 4.7.1.) The founder, who did so much to promote the education of women in Japan, was a source of inspiration for many students there. The University taught me that to work in society, rather than to stay at home, should be a natural aim for a woman who had received higher education in Japan. I worked as a teacher of English Language and Literature in the tertiary level of Japanese education for a few decades. There I gained an insight into the lives of Japanese home students including the stress they sometimes experienced in learning the English language. I was twice fortunate in having an opportunity to take a sabbatical leave from Japan. The first chance resulted in a year from 1980 at Darwin College, Cambridge University, where I studied modern English poetry on an overseas student's fellowship. The second chance was also for a year from 1996 spent at the Institute of Education, London University, studying for an MA degree in Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Prior to the beginning of the course I asked the administrator if any other Japanese students had enrolled on this course. To my surprise, she was not able to give me any information about my future classmates because of the regulations about Data Protection. I therefore had to spend a few weeks by myself feeling lonely and unable to discuss the course with fellow Japanese students. It turned out that there were, in the same class, three other Japanese students who had all attended a pre-sessional course and we soon became very good friends offering support and advice to each other. This emphasis on privacy seemed very odd to me at that time. Another incident occurred in the late 1990's because the Japanese language could not be readily installed into a computer at that time. When one of my fellow students asked a PC help-desk staff about the possibility of using Japanese on the computer, she was asked if this was a complaint of discrimination! These different notions of 'privacy' and 'discrimination' gave me a considerable culture shock.

At the same time as having these experiences, I was well aware that my co-national friends were, throughout the course, experiencing a series of hardships and problems including health conditions, financial problems, finding suitable study references and difficulties in both reading English references and completing written coursework on time. Some of these problems can best be described as those caused by 'academic shock'. Ryan and Carroll (2006) explain: "Nearly everyone has heard of culture shock but few talk about the equally difficult 'academic shock' students experience when their confidence plummets, they question their previous self-evaluation as competent learners, and they may even lose their knowledge about how to learn and succeed." (P.6-7)

As well as my fellow students' difficulties, I also had my own problems including looking after my primary school aged daughter who came to London with me. I felt myself to be a student with multiple handicaps: age, language, family, money, and most of all a new challenging field of study. These experiences provided the initial incentive for me to apply for a PhD course at Oxford Brookes University to enable me to carry out research into 'The Stress Factors and Coping Strategies of Japanese Students in UKHEIs'. Looking back I suppose it was partly the desire to provide some small help in improving the understanding, training, and support of Japanese students in UKHEIs and also partly the academic challenge of the research project that appealed to me.

Although I decided to carry out research into some of the more negative aspects of students' life in the UK, I also knew, from my own experiences, about the many positive aspects of international students' experiences. It is not difficult to find evidence for the importance and value of international study. Stephanie Siew Jean Tiew, who earned the title of International Student of the Year 2008 from the British Council, wrote: "Since coming to the UK, I feel the sky is the limit and I have dared to dream. This is a place full of opportunities and endless possibilities." (British Council Website 24/04/2008). With an aim, goal and dream of studying in the UK, international students learn and gain many new skills and knowledge including learning about UK culture and language. Studying in the UK is indeed a great opportunity. A book published by UKCOSA in

1979, entitled *Suffering for Success,* contained three essays awarded a top prize and written by international students in UKHEIs. One prize winner, Emeka Okoli wrote: "It has been a battle for survival and I am lucky to have come out of it alive." (p.11) This spirit of aiming at success by survival is expressed in the word '*gan-baru'* in Japanese. It is translated as "do one's best", "try hard", "hold on", "hold out", "keep fighting", or even "chin up!" It is the word most commonly used in Japanese when sending someone off for a trip, game, exam, or any other competitive enterprise. In reply one will say "*Gan-bari masu.*" (I will do my best.) With the hindsight of the research survey, one can discover that '*gan-baru*" was found to be the reply that was chosen by the largest number of respondents as their coping strategy, which nearly always brought about eventual success, when they encountered stressful situations. This is another story which could not be adequately covered in this research project which, thorough my own choice, concentrated on some of the more challenging aspects of the experiences of Japanese international students during their study and stay in the UK.

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Chapter One. Introduction

'Studying overseas changes young people and marks them for life.' **(Furnham 1997, p.29)**

'.....the process of foreign study has a profound influence on the student themselves – it is one of the most important experiences for most foreign students, shaping their outlooks, professional lives and orientations.' **(Altbach 1991, p.320)**

1.1. Preface

This research is about Japanese students' experiences in United Kingdom Higher Education Institutions (UKHEIs). The research is undertaken to find out how Japanese students in UKHEIs perceive, and try to overcome, their cross-cultural learning difficulties. These difficulties are investigated through the use of a survey of Japanese students' own perceptions of their stress factors and coping strategies, together with follow-up interviews and other documentary evidence including any related previous research. Use is made of graphs drawn by students to show how each perceived episode of stress is related to time factors throughout their stay in the UK. It is believed that this is the first time this wide ranging research into Japanese students in UKHEIs has been attempted. Altbach (1991) pointed out that relatively little research had been carried out about international students' experiences in comparison with the analysis of international study programmes and policies in the early 1990's. A review of more recent research suggests that this is still true in 2009.

1.2. Motivation of the research

The researcher herself is a Japanese student who studied in the UK, for a Master's degree at the London Institute of Education, on sabbatical leave from her work as a teacher of English in a Japanese university. She was motivated by incidents involving fellow Japanese students' experience of stress, together with a desire to better inform both Japanese universities and receiving institutions in the UK about problems of Japanese students and so improve understanding, support and preparation of future students.

This research also involves an examination of the difference between Japanese culture and that of the UK, bearing in mind a saying from Pascal's *Pensées:* 'There are truths on this side of the Pyrenees that are falsehoods on the other'.

International students' problems and difficulties can often be multifaceted, whether serious or trivial. In order to understand the nature and quality of their study experiences better, stress factors and coping strategies need to be investigated from linguistic, educational and cultural perspectives.

1.3. Significance of the research

Five explanations about the significance of this study now follow.

(1) The growing number of international students worldwide, including those from Japan, necessitates a more up-to-date investigation of their experiences in context. The statistical flows of international students in general, and Japanese students in particular, will be discussed in Chapter Two in full detail. However, a brief overview of the statistics is necessary here to provide some context in indicating the significance of this research topic.

At the time of analysing the research data the latest statistics showed that there were nearly two and a half million people (2,471,384) studying abroad as international students in the whole world. (UNESCO 2004 website: Education / Statistics / Reports, Table 18) Japan made a significant contribution to this figure, with about 60,000 students studying overseas. (ibid) According to the websites of the Japanese Ministry of Justice (2009) and Tomorrow (2009), over 34,800 came to the UK as visitors in 2004, and among these were the 6179 students reported by the UK Council for International Student Affairs as enrolled on courses in UK higher education institutions. (UKCISA website: UK Higher Education Statistics, 2008) This figure varies according to the nomenclature of 'Japanese students' in UKHEIs. In spite of such difficulties, UKCISA's website page estimates a figure of 6,200 in the year 2005/2006. Although this was less than 2.0 % of the total number of international students in UKHEIs (330,060), the growth rate in numbers of Japanese students over the last 20 years had been nearly 19 times, as in 1984 there were only 332 students. Japan in 2004 was the eighth country among the top ten non-EU sending countries.

Given the growing number of Japanese students, it is inevitable that students will encounter a variety of problems and difficulties as well, of course, as enjoyable and rewarding experiences. The research reveals concerns of Japanese students in UKHEIs, some of which are serious. If both UKHEIs and Japanese students wish to maintain this impressive rate of increase of the intake of students in the future, it will clearly be helpful to consider and learn from the accounts of Japanese students' experiences. Although this research does not investigate experiences of Chinese or other Asian students it is likely that the problems they face in the UK may be similar, especially if they are from countries where English language is not the primary language in secondary and higher education.

(2) In order to identify, whenever possible, accurate data, quantitative and qualitative research methods are given equal emphasis. Reviewing the literature on international students' experiences, it appears that there has never been a single piece of research carried out on the cross-cultural learning experiences of Japanese students, studying in the UK, focused upon their stress factors and coping strategies. There are studies about Japanese students' motivation, language difficulties, cultural differences and their problems as returnees after studying abroad (Kidder (1992), Yamamoto,Y.A. (1994), Habu (2000), Nishio (2001), Nipoda (2002), Noro (2006) etc.). Studies of Japanese students' experiences have also been carried out in other English speaking countries such as USA, Canada, and Australia. (Yamamoto T. (1986), Iwakiri (1993), Sorimachi (1994), Ward et al (1998), Tomioka (2001), Kudo (2002 a, b), etc.) Although many of these studies adopt a quantitative approach, the foci of these are on areas such as friendship patterns, English language learning strategies or psychological adjustment problems. This research is the first attempt ever made to consider the stress factors and coping strategies of Japanese students in UKHEIs and uses a quantitative approach combined with qualitative information gained from interviews.

The quantitative method of investigation can produce comparative data which a qualitative method of investigation cannot. However, although this gives some indication of how serious any particular stressful situation can be, it sometimes only gives a 'skeleton' knowledge for which qualitative research can often provide 'the flesh and blood' that more accurately shows an individual's overall condition.

(3) One significance of this research lies in the fact that it is targeted towards participants who are students of a single nationality. Although there are various studies relating to 'international students' as opposed to 'home students' or 'UK students', international students are not a monolithic group. Allen and Higgins (1994), who conducted a large-scale study on international students (N=1200) in 1994, wrote in their report: 'It is important that international students are not seen as a set or homogeneous group. Students from each country tend to have different perceptions, needs and expectations largely formed by their culture and previous educational experiences.' (p.103) Altbach (1991) also stated that future investigation of 'international study and students must take into account the needs and perspectives of the major sending nations.' (p.307) Japan is certainly included among these.

It must be acknowledged that there are also limitations in dealing with only one nationality. The real characteristics of one nationality may sometimes be better understood in comparison with other nationalities. This will have to be left for further research, with a multinational scope, although some comparisons between the UK and Japan are considered. The emphasis here will be placed more on an in-depth analysis of students of one nationality, analysing variables, such as age, gender, level of study and level of second language proficiency. While it is true that international students are often treated as if they were part of a homogenous group, it is hoped that, by focusing on one particular group, this may help for a better understanding of their specific needs and contributions. It is, however, important to also remember that nationality is not a monolithic construction and acknowledge the problematic nature of Japanese identity.

(4) Although students' problems are naturally various and variable, there are three broad areas of experience that may cause stress to Japanese students in UKHEIs. These are areas of language, education and socio-cultural experience. These three areas are of course inter-related and often over-lapping, but it is important to know how students see these problems in their own minds. In other words, when they have problems it is useful to know to what they attribute them. Walker (1997, p.148, 276) wrote that 'Japanese students' difficulties with English are legendary', but whether students themselves agree or not is another matter, and also whether they think language problems are the most serious ones is yet to be established. This research is intended to provide an answer to questions such as these.

(5) It is hoped that the research will help future Japanese students to better prepare for and overcome difficulties, and also inform UK institutions about potentially helpful steps to give better support to Japanese students. What is beneficial to international students is usually also in the best interest of receiving institutions.

1.4. Aims of the research and research questions

It will be clear from the previous discussion that the overarching question framing this research can be expressed as:

'What are the stress factors and coping strategies experienced by Japanese students studying in Institutions of Higher Education in the UK?'

From this question, others follow concerning both the existing research in this field, the development of an empirical approach leading towards a response, and the collection and an analysis of relevant data. Seven subsidiary questions, which deal with these points, are set out below:

(1) How should the terms 'stress' and 'coping strategy' be understood in the research?
(2) What can we learn from related research into the problems of both Japanese and international students?
(3) What methods and questions should be used in the research?
(4) What are the main problems and coping strategies of Japanese students in the UK?
(5) How do stress factors vary among groups of respondents?
(6) How are students' stress factors related to time factors throughout their stay in the UK?
(7) What other indicators of respondents' experiences are provided through their recommendations to future Japanese students from Japan and to UKHEI professionals?

It should be noted that the advice given by the Japanese students is itself another important indicator of their own experience in coping with stressful events encountered during their studies in the UK.

Another feature of this research project is that it follows an eclectic and multi-

dimensional path rather than being dependent on any single established academic discipline. This is because students' experience at a foreign university is related to a whole range of human experience, facing the diverse problems that may occur in that environment.

1.5. The structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into five main parts. The first part (Chapters 2 and 3) examines the rationale for the research in order to establish a framework for discussing the concepts of stress and coping strategies, and to consider the use of the three concepts of language, education and culture in order to provide a possible theoretical structure for the research. The second part (Chapters 4 and 5) gives background information for the research, including statistical features, and some consideration of Japanese historical views on overseas study. This is followed by an examination of existing studies that deal with international students' problems in their overseas study. The third part (Chapter 6) is concerned with the approach and methodology which are used in the research. The fourth part (Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12) covers the presentation of data and its examination and analysis. Finally Chapter 13 provides a summary together with some further reflections, important findings, suggestions for future research and an account of the main achievements of the research.

Chapter Two. Key Issues: the Concepts of Stress and Coping Strategies

'Studying abroad can be exciting, deeply rewarding and enlightening. It can also be challenging and stressful.' **(Barron 2003, p.vii.)**

2.1. Introduction

The first of the seven subsidiary research questions asked 'How should the terms 'stress' and 'coping strategy' be understood in the research?' (1.4) The main aim of this chapter is to establish a framework for discussing these concepts. This was considered to be essential before devising a questionnaire to cover a wide range of situations in which stress can be experienced, together with a variety of possible coping strategies that students might adopt. This chapter considers the physiological mechanism involved in stressful situations, the mental states identified by psychologists, and the way that many negatively connoted words are used in society as synonyms of stress. A basic model for this research has also been devised to conceptualise stress studies and theories.

Research studies of coping strategies for stress are then considered and ways of distinguishing between different types of strategies are identified. Finally, examples of previous educational research into coping strategies are given, followed by a summary with its implications for this research.

2.2 Physiological stress

Hans Selye (1907-1982) is called 'the father of stress studies' and is the author of the most frequently quoted references to this topic. Among all his extensive research findings, there are two fundamental notions which have contributed to the development of stress theory. One is the concept that Selye described as the General Adaptation Syndrome, and the other is his distinction between two types of stress termed 'eustress' and 'distress'.

Since Selye was a physician and endocrinologist, his theory explained how an organism (such as a rat) can respond to an external stimulus by, for example, producing special hormones such as adrenalin. He called this the non-specific response of a human body to

any demand made upon it (Selye 1974, p.27) and the body's response mechanism 'the General Adaptation Syndrome.' (p.38) By this he meant that organisms show common signs of the response or 'adaptation syndrome' against an external stimulus. He argued that the general response mechanism or adaptation syndrome affects the whole body, and therefore must be understood separately from the 'local response mechanism'. When cold affects a body, for example, shivering is a local response but the secretion of a certain hormone is the non-specific (or general) response against the external demand, which occurs within an organism regardless of the kind of stimulus. Selye asserted that the biological response is the same when a body receives a 'good / positive' stress ('eustress') or a 'bad / negative' stress ('distress').

However, also within the physiological context, Gross (2001) pointed out that:

'Up to a point, stress is inevitable and can be tolerated, and moderate levels may even be beneficial. Complete absence of stress (as measured, say, by anxiety or physiological arousal) could be positively detrimental (for example, you could be so relaxed that you fail to notice the car speeding towards you as you are crossing the road). Stress helps to keep you alert, providing some of the energy required to maintain an interest in the environment, to explore it and adapt to it. However, when we are stretched beyond our limits, it becomes positively harmful.' (p.170)

It will be important, when considering the research findings, to remember that some stress for all students is not only inevitable but also beneficial, triggering off a response or coping mechanism that is essential. When the stress reaches a point 'beyond our limits' this corresponds to a period called the 'exhaustion stage' by Selye. The different types of external 'demand', he called 'stressors'. These can be stressful life events such as illness, financial hardship, or even life threatening experience. These 'stressors' can be studied through a range of academic disciplines such as the physiological, psychological, or sociological, and this may sometimes lead to problems of understanding in evaluating a student's account of their stressful experiences.

2.3. Psychological stress

In contrast to this physiological definition of stress, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) made an important differentiation:

'All stimulus-response approaches are circular and beg the crucial questions of what it is about the stimulus that produces a particular stress response, and what it is about the response that indicates a particular stressor. It is the observed stimulus-response relationship, not the stimulus or response, that defines stress.' (p.15)

Their definition of stress is summarised as follows: 'Psychological stress is a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being.' (p.19) Lazarus and Folkman thus emphasize that stress is a mental process, as well as a mental product, during which the individual experiences difficulty in adaptation. Thus the same environmental factor, whether it is the weather, noise, light or any kind of situational and social change from a war to a pet's death may, or may not, be a stressor depending on the person's mental judgment, which they called 'cognitive appraisal'. They, therefore, identified that there are both primary and secondary appraisals and that there are two major categories of possible copings - 'emotion-focused' and 'problem-focused'.

In addition, Gross (2001) offers this helpful opinion:

'We often respond emotionally to events and situations that we believe make demands on us that we cannot meet either because we do not have the necessary abilities or resources, or because they force us to make very difficult choices and decisions. We describe these negative kinds of events or situations as stressful, and our emotional responses to them as the experience of stress.' (p.133)

2.4. Synonyms of the term 'stress'

Possible synonyms of the term stress can be found among many similar negatively-connoted words. The following box contains a list of vocabulary that has been collected by the researcher randomly throughout the research process. These are the words often used in a similar sense to, or in close association with, the word stress. The list is an

unstructured collection of adjectives, verbs and nouns, arranged only in an alphabetical order, and are by no means complete. However, in a search for people's feelings and experiences of stressful events and circumstances, a rapid look at a list like this can provide an overall image of negative feelings and experiences of stress. Also it helps to illustrate the immense variety of possible stress factors encountered in daily life.

accident, adversity, affliction, ailment, alienation, ambiguity, anger, annoyance, anomie, anxiety, bereavement, burden, challenge, conflict, confusion, dangers, irritation, demand, depressed, devastating, difficulty, discomfort, disgraceful, disgusting, displeasing, distress, downcast, effort, embarrassment, emotional disturbance, error, erroneous, exertion, exhaustion, external force, failure, fatigue, fear, fight, flight, frustration, hardship, hard work, harmful, hassle, hazard, heart-broken, hectic, horrendous, hurdles, illness, inadequacy, injury, isolation, load, maladjustment, meaninglessness, mental disorder, misfortune, mishap, mourning, nervousness, nerve-racking, norm-less-ness, noxious, obnoxious, obstacle, over-load, over-stimulation, over-work, pain, pinched, plight, powerlessness, pre-menstrual tension, taxing, tiredness, pressure, problem, raped, self-estrangement, shameful, stagnation, stretch, struggle, stuck, threat, threatening, tiredness, toilsome, tragedy, tragic, trauma, trouble, troublesome, uncanny, uncertainty, uncomfortable, uneasiness, unhealthy, unwell, vexed, worry. (108 words)

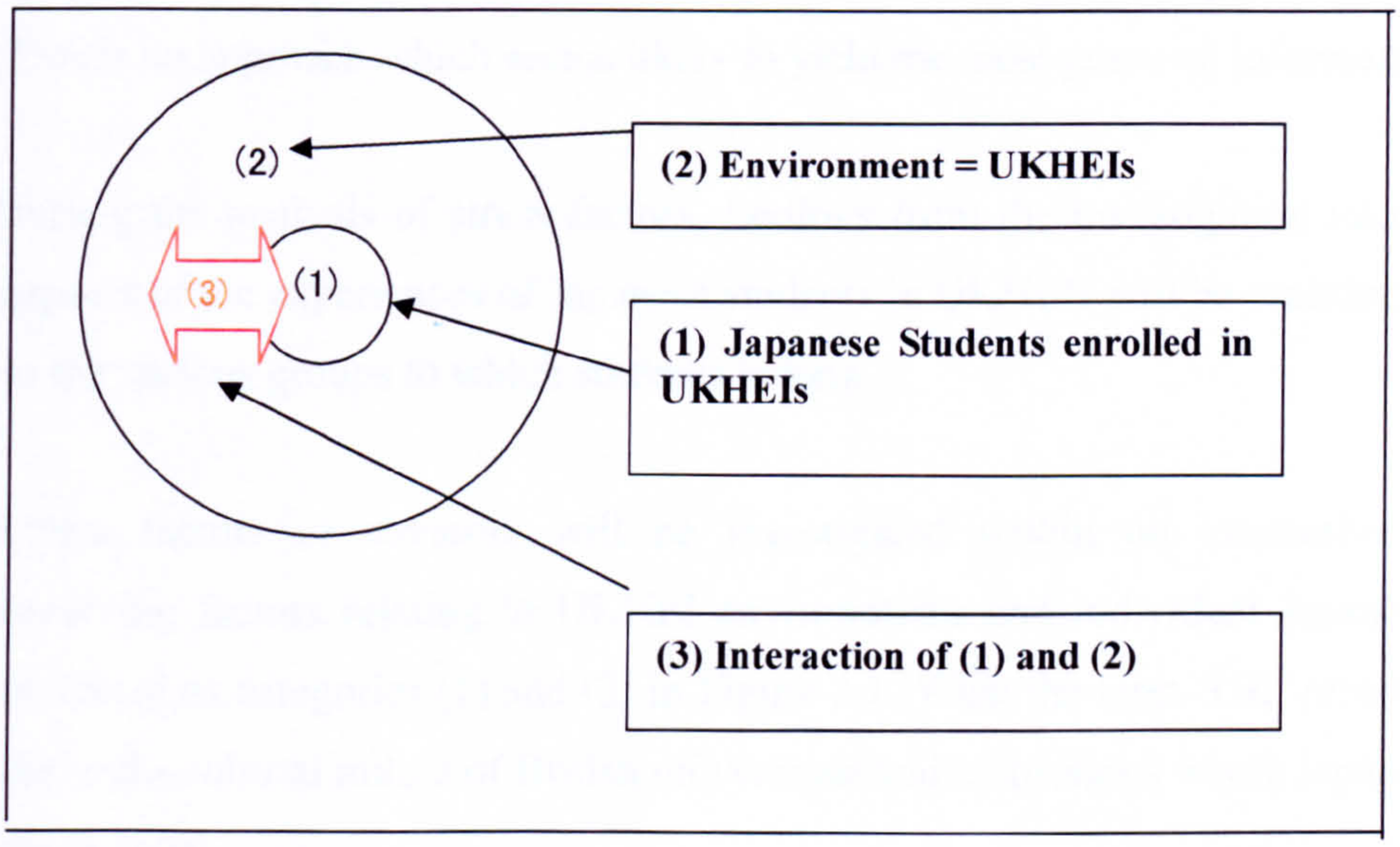
Besides these, of course, words like 'war, imprisonment, natural disaster, uprooting' may easily be associated with stressful feelings. Needless to say, 'death, pain and loss' are considered to be major stressful life events. Furthermore, it is very easy to associate words like 'exam', 'tutorial', 'presentation', 'time-limit' or 'deadline' with the possibility of causing stress to students. To others a term like 'culture shock' may be almost synonymous with stressful experience, and this will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter. The term 'overcrowding' or 'congestion' or such opposite words as 'sparse' or 'rustic' could be stressful to a different group of people. (e.g. students who were born in big towns and have no experience of living in the countryside, and vice versa.)

2.5. A basic model for the research

It is, of course, always necessary to emphasize the importance of identifying whose stress is being discussed. In this respect, factors such as gender, age, cultural and ethnic background are central.

A useful basic model, devised by the researcher, for conceptualizing stress studies and theories is given below:

Figure 2.1. The researcher's basic model for conceptualizing stress theories



As shown in Figure 2.1 above, the term stress can refer to three factors: the Japanese student (organism), the challenges of the UKHEIs' environment, and the relationship between the two in its broadest sense. In this world, all matter, including living creatures, receives force (including gravity) or energy from external circumstances, both naturally or culturally, just because it occupies a certain space at any one time. Every living creature can survive because it is surrounded by natural resources including air, water, and a certain range of temperatures, to which it is possible to adapt. For a person to survive and to flourish, it is essential to be able to cope with the environment, including man-made cultures and societies. People usually adapt to all these external forces or influences. If this external factor is called 'a stressor' at its most fundamental level of the meaning, then the stressor is universal. However, a certain incident may appear to one student as very stressful and to another student as not stressful at all. This is why the question of 'whose

stress' needs to be examined is an important starting point for any study of stress in the human sciences.

To summarise, four points have been confirmed as relevant to this research from the viewpoint of stress theory in general:

(1) The term stress, when applied to students, will be used in a very broad sense, almost as an umbrella term that can cover the whole list of terms already mentioned and more. It can be an instrumental term to measure a gap or mismatch of Japanese students within the UK educational environment. This will enable respondents to respond to questionnaires or interview questions by exploring their own experiences of the stress. This is an approach which seems likely to yield the most practical information.

(2) Durin g the analysis of stress factors, findings from the investigation into the various aspects of the experiences of Japanese students in UKHEIs will be examined in relation to the various groups to which students belong.

(3) S tress factors or stressors will be investigated within an interactive framework involving factors relating to UKHEI environments and individual Japanese students, indicated as categories (1) and (2) in Figure 2.1. What the term 'UK' refers to includes the socio-cultural milieu of British universities and institutions where Japanese students are situated.

(4) F actors relating to UKHEI environments will especially focus upon three areas of students' experiences. These are language, educational and socio-cultural experiences. These three areas are highlighted for a number of reasons which are given in chapter three.

2.6. The concept of coping strategies

No previous study has investigated the coping strategies of Japanese students in UKHEIs. Nevertheless, studies of coping strategies have been carried out as widely and frequently as those of stress and stress factors. They have involved various areas of research including Psychology, Biology, Medicine, Health-care and Sociological studies in areas such as Business, Politics and Education.

A straightforward definition of coping strategies is given by MacArthur and MacArthur (Website; Coping Strategies in Research Network on Socioeconomic Status and Health).

'Coping strategies refer to the specific efforts, both behavioural and psychological, that people employ to master, tolerate, reduce or minimize stressful events.' (p.1)

A coping strategy can be described by specifying three elements; (1) 'Who' (2) 'Does/acts how' (3) 'About/with what'. For example, the term coping strategy may mean (1) 'a patient' (2) 'tries to live with' (3) 'the pain of his /her illnesses'. The first part of these, which is an agent, can be an individual, a family or any other group of people or organizations. The second element, which is a verb, shows types of actions or behaviour such as 'try to fight', 'try to avoid', 'try to solve', 'try to minimize', 'seeking to master', 'reduce', 'tolerate', 'deny' or 'ignore'. Also the word 'to cope' as a verb can mean to contend, strive, match, or meet (as in 'meet a need'), or even 'to move' or 'to work out'. Finally the third elements of the definition can involve such words as 'stress', 'conflict', 'difficulties', 'stressful events', 'pain', 'pressure', 'potential threats', 'existing needs', 'taxing circumstances', 'personal and interpersonal problems' or 'environmental adversity'.

There are two fundamental types of coping strategies that have been identified. These are problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies. Folkman (1984) wrote:

'Over 1,300 stressful episodes were analyzed, and the findings showed that either problem- or emotion-focused coping was used in over 98 % of the episodes. Moreover, problem focused forms of coping increased in situations that were appraised as changeable, thereby holding the potential for control, and emotion-focused forms of coping increased in situations appraised as not amenable to change.' (p.844)

Besides these two types of coping strategies, MacArthur and MacArthur found that there is 'an additional distinction that is often made in the coping literature,' which is between active and avoidant coping strategies. They wrote:

'Active coping strategies are either behavioural or psychological responses designed to change the nature of the stressor itself or how one thinks about it, whereas avoidant

coping strategies lead people into activities (such as alcohol use) or mental states (such as withdrawal) that keep them from directly addressing stressful events.' (MacArthur, J. D. and MacArthur, C. T., 1998, Website)

A comparison of the two distinctions shows that problem-focused coping strategies are similar to active coping strategies, while emotion-focused strategies are closer to avoidant coping strategies. However, these two pairs of coping types do not simply overlap each other, because the criteria of distinction are different. The problem/emotion distinction deals with mental/psychological functions of the coping mechanism, whilst active/avoidant distinction is more concerned with behavioural patterns and outcomes. It is possible that certain emotion-focused coping strategies can be fairly active as, for example, in using humour in order to minimise pain or stress. There are, of course, all sorts of variations of these types of coping ways and it does not always mean that a person deploys only one type of strategy at a time to cope with a circumstance which often involves a multiple or a complex set of difficulties or stress factors. Coping mechanisms may also of course change over time and may be influenced by strategies that the student found useful in their own country.

Ishihara et al. (ed.) (1985) wrote about 3 possible factors that can affect coping strategies:

(1) The source of the stress (the location of stressors)

(2) Options to prevent stressors – easy effective strategies are chosen or encouraged provided that other conditions are the same.

(3) The control of coping – a strategy that does not work, or is against rules or law, is to be avoided and once an option is allowed, affordable and effective, the person is motivated to use the same strategy repeatedly. (p. 94. Translation by the writer.)

He also suggested that the higher the degree of stress, the more the responding behaviour tends to become instinctive and primitive.

These three factors, to determine the nature of coping strategies, are of theoretical value, but in the real world it is rather difficult to apply these rigorously mechanical selection processes in order to measure the effectiveness of a particular coping strategy to deal with a particular stressor, problem or threat. Individuals have their own ideas,

preferences, attitudes or habits of choosing certain coping strategies, with or without conscious choice, belief or past experience. In the real world, people variously and necessarily learn to manage their ways of surviving, involving a learning process throughout their lives.

It must therefore be remembered that Japanese students in the UK may often be influenced by coping strategies that they have found useful in Japan when deciding consciously or instinctively their response to stressful situations in the UK.

2.7. Examples of research involving a qualitative approach to coping strategies

This section deals with a review of the literature related to coping strategies. This involves studies of three selected groups of people, all studied through a qualitative approach. The first study looked at the causes of mal-adaptation or illnesses of Japanese people living abroad. The second looked at some of the coping strategies of international students in Japan and the third consisted of the testimonies of five overseas students in the UK that have been chosen to emphasize that coping is not just one strategy, but a whole process that lasts throughout their entire study abroad. The aim is also to identify a variety of topics to help in understanding what kinds of coping strategies are currently identified with what kind of problems.

(1) Inamura (1980) studied a considerable number of Japanese people who suffered from mal-adaptation illnesses whilst living abroad. This was a very wide-scale qualitative study, which he carried out through psychiatric treatment of his patients. Inamura concluded that there were two key-factors of mal-adaptation that he could identify among his patients. These were lack of (1) self-sufficiency and (2) communicability. The term self-sufficiency means the ability of living independently without constant psychological support from others. Communicability is a skill to establish mutual understanding in social relationships, and this means the ability of 'opening one's heart to others', having enough 'curiosity, capacity, flexibility and tolerance', which Inamura said is ultimately love of, and devotion to, human kind. These two factors work as if they are two wheels of a car complementing each other.

(2) Moyer (1987) studied stress factors of 149 international students living in Japan and their ways of coping. Her study identified seven factors of stressful situations and

events, which included communication problems derived partly from language problems, different value systems and customs and uncontrollable life problems such as illness or lack of finance. Moyer presented testimonies of coping strategies given by three participants who all encountered a problem of ambiguous situations in their communication with people in Japan. The first respondent coped by reaching the conclusion that Japanese people do not express their opinions directly, the second tried to find out a clue to understand both explicit and implicit meanings in Japanese communications, and the third coped with this ambiguous situation by using a kind of guideline or principle. Moyer's study showed that each coping strategy is bound to depend on both personal reasons and the kinds of situational demand. This suggests that coping strategies can sometimes be better identified by a narrative or ethnographic method rather than a typographical grouping of strategies.

(3) UKCOSA (1987) published a booklet entitled '*Overseas students – at home in Britain?*' This contained 5 essays written by overseas students in UKHEIs. These testimonies showed that the students coped with their difficulties throughout a long process of learning how to overcome the problems which they encountered. Students learned skills for survival and acquired knowledge in order to succeed in their cross-cultural adjustment process, despite differences of languages, values and customs between home and host countries. This means that their coping was not confined to just one strategy, but a whole process that lasted throughout their study in the UK.

Whenever a study takes a qualitative approach, as in the three considered above, the description of coping strategies tends to be episodic and in narrative form. This approach has the advantage of giving a detailed picture of an actual stressful event and can often be used to supplement any quantitative survey.

2.8. Summary and implications for the research

Since many synonyms of the term stress exist, it must be remembered, when considering students' perception of stress, that there will be different shades of possible meaning and therefore experience involved.

Stress has been considered from its physiological mechanism, as a response of the human body to any stressful demand made upon it, and also from a psychological

viewpoint, looking at the mental process during which an individual experiences difficulty in adapting to a stressful situation. The term has also been viewed from the standpoint of its relation to words such as 'exam' or 'illness', and may be replaced as a concept by many similar negatively-connoted words such as 'anomie' or 'alienation'. It has been pointed out that it is always necessary to emphasise the importance of identifying whose stress is being discussed, including factors such as gender, age and cultural background.

Some researchers have used a quantitative approach when it is possible, for example, to compare the relative importance and frequency of the use of the various coping strategies for each type of stressful situation. However this data does not give a complete picture of actual stressful situations so that, whenever possible, this quantitative research should be supplemented by qualitative information gained from written or verbal contributions. The research has shown that the results can often be dependent on personal reasons as well as the kinds of situational demand. It must also be remembered that coping is not just one strategy, at a particular time, but rather a whole process that lasts throughout a student's studies in the UK.

The next chapter will consider three broad areas of experience which may cause stress to students in order to consider their possible use in designing a theoretical framework for the research.

Chapter Three. Sources of Students' Stress: Language, Education and Culture

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter the three concepts – language, education and culture – are discussed in order to examine a possible theoretical structure for the research. This will be important when trying to find an answer to the third of the seven subsidiary research questions, 'What methods and questions should be used in the research' and will also involve trying to learn from earlier related research as required by the second of the subsidiary research questions. (1.4)

The first section of the chapter explains why these three concepts are highlighted. The second section will discuss how these areas are connected theoretically with one another and overlap, despite having their own conceptual independence, and the third section will attempt to demonstrate the relevance to the research of these three areas by exploring possible conflicting ideas and practices that sometimes occur in Japan-UK cross-cultural situations.

3.2. Rationale for the focus on three areas of experience

In a relatively early book entitled *Foreign Students in the United States of America*, Hull (1978) pointed out that foreign *(sic)* students experience difficulties in the main areas of culture, education and language. Although his comments refer to the USA, they also seem applicable to the UKHEIs. He elaborated further:

'It is obvious that, if entry into a U.S. collegiate institution is a "major developmental transition" for well-prepared American high school graduates, the transition will be more difficult for young people arriving from distinctly different cultures with different educational systems. Add to this the problem of language, and it is easy to understand how the U.S., the educational environment itself, may produce anxiety in the foreign student.' (p.9)

He commented further on Asian students in particular:

'It has been suggested that Asian students, specifically those with origins in China, Korea or Japan, seem to be particularly prone to misunderstandings and social isolation from Americans. At least part of the reason seems to stem from the cultural, psychological and language differences between the East and the West.' (p.11)

Although Hull's view matches the premise of this research, this did not start with his statement as a basis for study. Instead it was primarily decided from reasoning based upon the researcher's own experience and also a preliminary study which was carried out in order to validate whether these three areas of study were relevant in exploring students' stress during their periods of overseas study.

Throughout the whole research process, only a few more studies have been found that are focused on the same three areas. One of these is a study by Pugh and Fenelon (1988), which argued that 'Foreign students entering universities in any country have a threefold adjustment to make; linguistic, educational and cultural.' (p.310) Another is a report entitled *Impacts of Study Abroad Programmes on Students and Graduates* by Opper, Teichler and Carlson (1990). This is a comprehensive report of a large-scale research project involving five countries (UK, USA, Sweden, France and Germany) and more than 1000 international students who joined various studying-abroad programmes in these countries. Three of the chapters were entitled:

4. Academic Effects of Study Abroad
5. Effects of Study Abroad upon Foreign Language Proficiency
6. Cultural Impacts.

The main implication of these studies is that a multi-disciplinary approach is both necessary and desirable. As Hofstede (2001) points out:

'Cross-cultural studies presuppose a systems approach, by which I mean that any element of the total system called culture should be eligible for analysis, regardless of the discipline that usually deals with such elements.' (p.19)

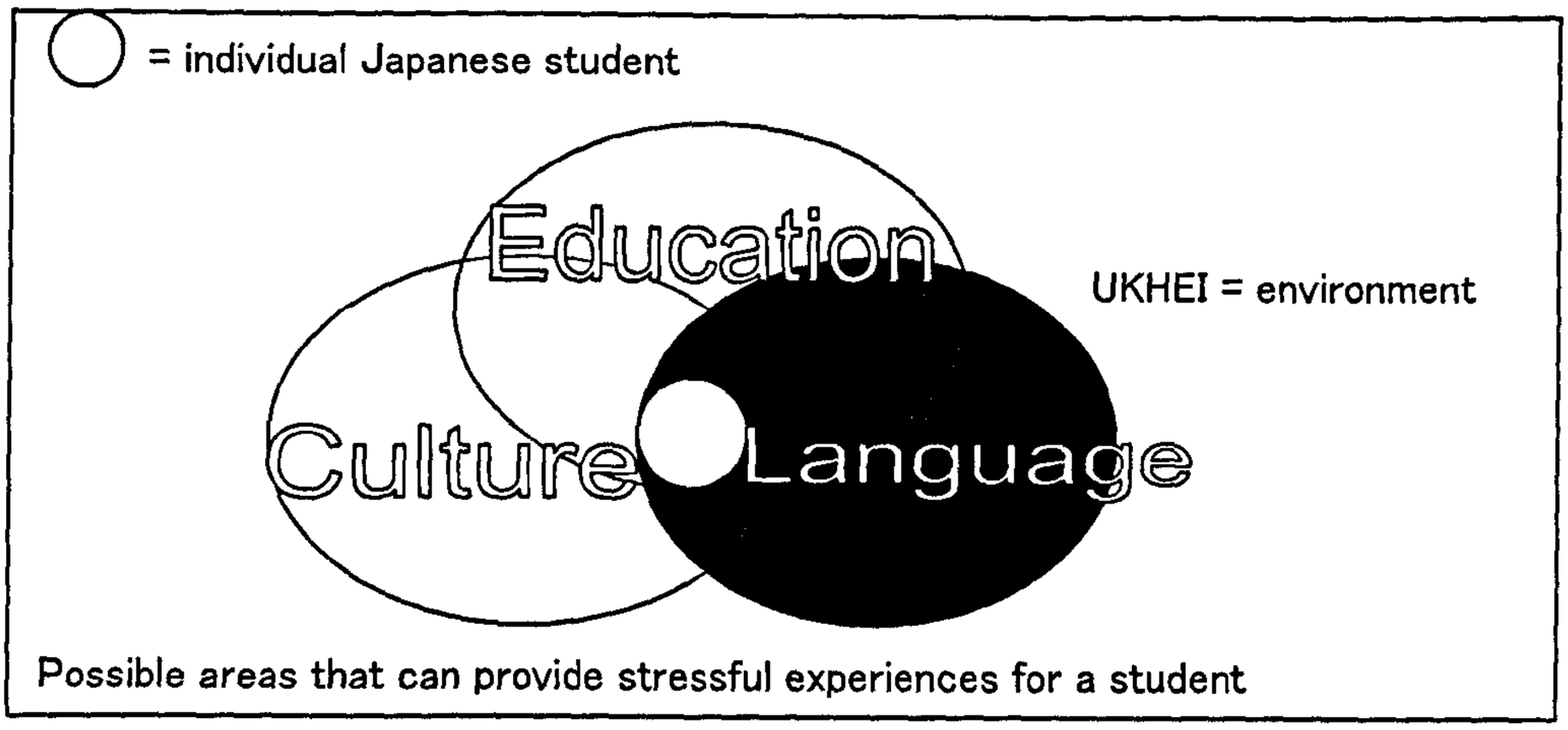
There are two main reasons for the choice of these three areas. One is that the concepts of language, education and culture, although interdependent, can be considered in

isolation from each other, each having already established theoretical independence as an academic discipline. For example, research into linguistic problems of Japanese students in UKHEIs can be focused more specifically on grammar, pragmatics, phonology, semantics, conversation analysis or communication. The same is true in educational or cultural research within the territories of each discipline's subdivided categories. However, what was important at the start of this research was that it was decided to take a whole person approach (Maslow 1970) rather than merely to be confined by specific disciplinary structures. The aim of this research is therefore to study students' own perceptions from various angles and to compare these three areas of experience. We need to ask questions such as: Are language difficulties the most serious stress factors for Japanese students in the UK? How stressful are cultural factors to them? Which are more stressful for them, educational factors or cultural factors?

However, the other reason comes from the fact that these three areas are actually interrelated to, and inseparable from, each other to a great extent. For example language experiences overlap educational experiences, such as classroom conversations or essay writing. Humfrey (1999) is one of many researchers who argue that 'academic qualifications cannot be considered separately from linguistic ability.' (p.28) Similarly, cultural experiences cannot be separated from language or educational experiences.

A possible model for symbolizing relationships between these three areas in terms of students' environmental problems is shown in Figure 3.1.below. This model suggests that an individual student is immersed in these three areas during their period of studying abroad period and that these tend to overlap to a great extent. The terms 'language, education and culture' can be treated separately, but at the same time the differences are in fact not clear-cut. In the real world they are scattered around and unorganized.

Figure 3.1. Three areas of students' experiences that include possible factors to cause students' stress.



3.3. Interrelationship of the three areas of experience

It is therefore necessary to consider how these three concepts of language, education and culture are related to one another in human society. In what sense is it possible to say that these three concepts have common grounds or mutual elements? Further examination of these questions is an important task for this research.

Taylor et al. (1995) remind us that through our membership of social groups, such as in the family, school, or workplace, we learn the language and rules, both written and unwritten, of our society. They also explain:

'The learned shared behaviour of members of society is known as culture. Culture is a social blueprint, a guide for living, the way of life of a society. Without culture it is difficult to see how human society could operate.' (p.6)

Using this statement it is possible to say that keywords to connect the three concepts language, education and culture are 'society', 'learning', and 'socialization'. It is also through human society that language, education and culture are mutually patterned.

In *Culture's Consequences*, Hofstede (2001) writes this about language and its relationship to culture:

'Culture includes language. ... Language is the most clearly recognizable part of

culture and the part that has lent itself most readily to systematic study and theory building. Language is very evidently a learned characteristic (not an inherited one), and people are able to acquire additional languages beyond their first. The first foreign language is most difficult to master...' (p.21)

For the participants in this research, the first language is Japanese and the first foreign language is English. Therefore it is essential to consider differences between these two languages when problems of Japanese students in UKHEIs are being investigated.

According to Haralambos and Holborn (2000):

'Education is, in its broadest sense, simply one aspect of socialization; it involves the acquisition of knowledge and the learning of skills. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, education often also helps to shape beliefs and moral values.' (p.774)

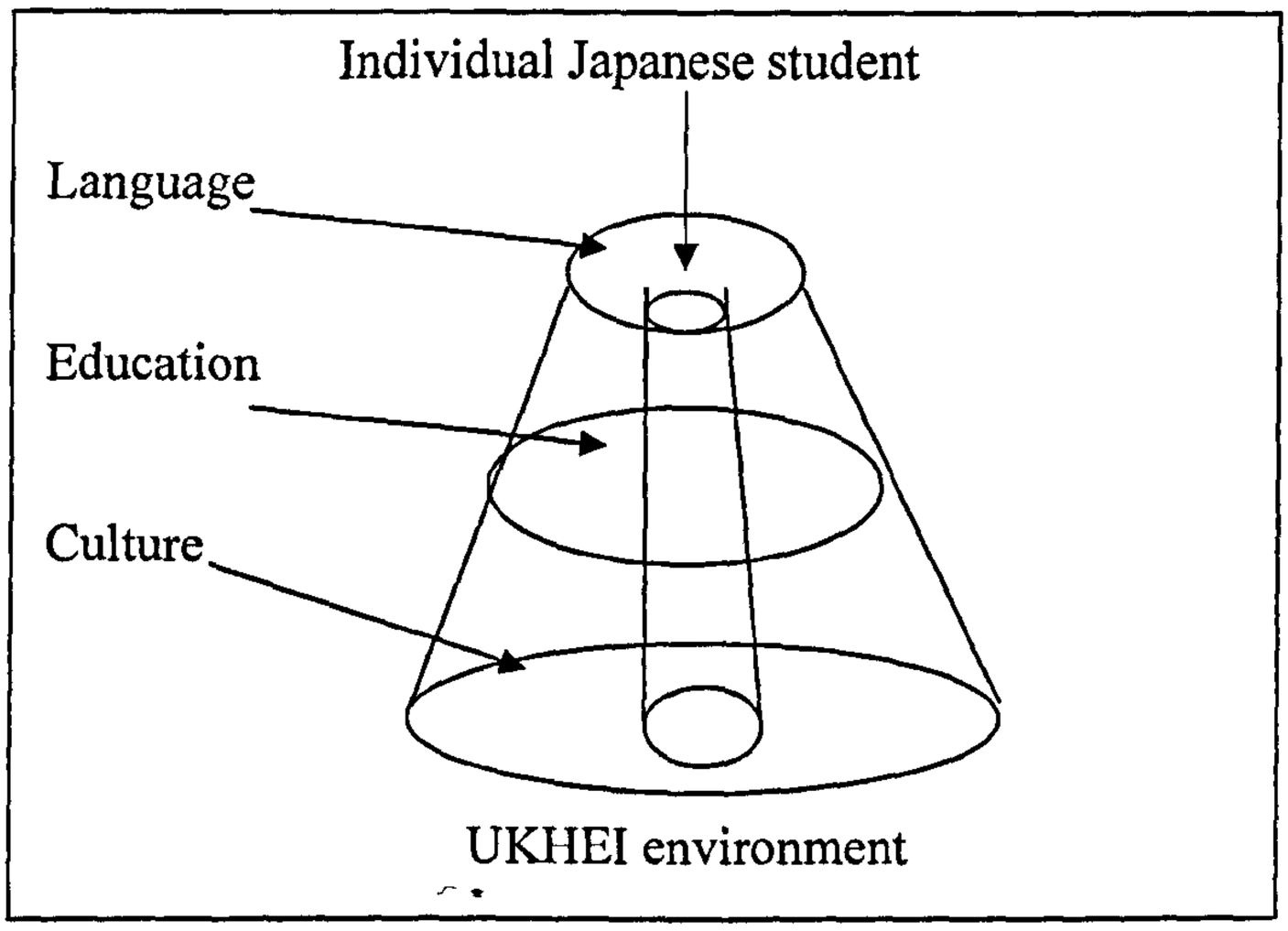
Japanese students in UKHEIs are learning not only English language, but also knowledge and skills to fulfill educational requirements, which are the main part of the process and product of their socialization, i.e. acculturation and education. As Kleineberg (in a Foreword to Hull (1978)) describes international students as 'eager and vulnerable'(p.x): their learning difficulties and problems are no doubt sometimes severe in foreign countries. As with language problems, students sometimes experience difficulties due to the different rules and practices of educational systems between the UK and Japan. The implication is that education occurs throughout experience.

Culture is defined by Hofstede (2001) as the 'collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.' (p.9) Culture is also a comprehensive concept including both 'education' and 'language.' Therefore arguably, when students' problems are considered, the term 'cultural factors' could mean almost everything including language and educational problems.

A possible three dimensional model for symbolizing these three areas, in relation to students' environmental problems, is shown in Figure 3.2 below. This involves recognition of the fact that students' experiences also involve the Japanese language, and the associated educational and socio-cultural backgrounds that each individual student brings to bear on the experience of studying abroad. This is represented by a

cylinder in the Figure 3.2. The model also shows how individual students' problems are immersed in these three areas, which tend to overlap to a great extent, during their overseas study.

Figure 3.2. Three-dimensional model showing the relationships of three concepts



3.4. Relevance to the research – Main differences between the languages, cultures and educational systems of Japan and the UK

It has been mentioned that international students' difficulties and problems often arise from the different backgrounds they carry into the hosting countries. Therefore it should be possible to gain some understanding of the stress factors, experienced by Japanese students, by comparing the rules and meanings of the two countries' languages, educational systems and socio-cultural phenomena.

Students may perceive language difficulties as the most serious problems, as language is located at the core of a person's mind and also at the centre of an individual's cultural values, as Hofstede (2001) pointed out. The Japanese language has of course a very different system from English. According to Reischauer (1988):

'Japanese has remained a strictly agglutinative language in which the concluding word, which is a verb or an adjective, ties onto itself subsidiary elements that specify such things as tense, mood, politeness, and whether the sentence is causative, passive, negative or a question.... For example, the simple verb *kaku*, 'to write', can be

expanded through agglutination into *kakaserarenakattaraba*, (If a (person) had not been made to write) or into dozens of other forms that would defy direct translation into English.' (p.385)

Amongst popular guidance for English language teaching and learning in Japan there is a saying that 'those who command verbs with ease will command English.' This is a prototypical example of the differences of 'rules' of Japanese and English, and therefore is a good example of difficulties that many language learners face between the two languages. The difference lies not only in complicated rules of agglutination but also in the word order as in the fact that a verb or an adjective comes at the end of a sentence in Japanese. English has a syntactic rule or canonical order S-V-O (subject-verb-object), whereas Japanese convention requires S-O-V (subject-object-verb). Therefore, word order must be inverted in most sentences and utterances.

Language teachers and learners of both nationalities have to struggle with this 'word order inversion' which constantly causes a crucial syntactic barrier. This inversion is so persistent that it often impedes the expression of the natural flow of thought. Hence, to quote Reischauer (1988) again:

'Unfortunately the Japanese have proved notably inept at learning to speak foreign languages or to comprehend them aurally. Throughout the world one hears this is commented upon with surprise and contrasted to the skill Japanese show at almost everything else.' (p.387)

Thus it appears that deciding whether a student's problem is related to language competence or to another pragmatic consideration is a problem which is often difficult to decide, depending on the actual situation involved.

3.5. Other problems of communication and understanding

3.5.1. Pragmatic failures

A great deal of research has been carried out in both linguistic and pragmatic fields about the acquisition of English by Japanese learners. Studies of error and contrastive analysis have provided Japanese learners with many useful linguistic key points to assist

in their language learning. There has also been a great deal of research leading to the creation of new teaching materials, in the fields of phonology, syntax and semantics. However the pragmatic field of English teaching and learning has been relatively neglected. This is compounded by the fact that the lack of direct contact with native speakers of English gives Japanese learners relatively few opportunities to acquire pragmatic knowledge and skills. The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme, started in 1987, enabled graduates native English speakers to teach in Japan for up to three years. Despite this development even very simple but polite phrases like 'Yes, please' or 'No, thank you' in basic social interaction are often not acquired by Japanese learners, and they often have had more opportunities to learn Shakespearean phrases or grammatical terminology than these basic utterances. Therefore, they may reply to an invitation or offer with a simple 'Yes' or 'No', which can be perceived as an act of rudeness although it is not intentional. Saying 'Thank you' and 'I am sorry' are very important conversational routines. However, these frequently used utterances, showing gratitude and apology, are also difficult for Japanese learners to master, in their appropriate use of English, because they are often determined by a learner's cultural background and social circumstances. As a consequence, there are many examples of failures, errors and communication breakdowns in Japanese use of English.

Another basic difference lies in the fact that Japan, as a relatively closed, collectivist country, which has no history of being colonized and, as an island country similar to Great Britain, has always needed to regulate human relationships in a vertical and hierarchical structure for the sake of stability and maintenance of the island nation's independence. Those words that are often quoted as characteristic of Japanese culture, such as '*amae*' (dependency), '*tate-shakai'* (vertical society), '*shuudan-* or *chouwa – shikou*' (group- or harmony-orientation) and 'consensus-orientation', are at the root of their meanings all based upon ways of taking a non-competitive (or to use Hofstede's term, 'feminine') stance in human relationships, implying that in Japan individuals are habitually programmed to conform to society's common rules or authorities, tending to avoid confrontation and argument.

In Hendry's (1987) words:

'There is a great emphasis placed in Japan on being like others and fitting in well. An often quoted proverb is that a nail which sticks out will be knocked in.' (p.85)

According to Reischauer (1988), Japan's uniqueness lies in the fact that:

'Nation, language, race and culture are all related but distinct concepts to most modern peoples, but in Japan they all seem virtually synonymous.' (p.395)

This sense of 'one-ness' or 'uniformity' is what makes Japan unique. Although there are some exceptions, this monolithic and homogenous nature seems to strongly characterise Japanese national identity. It is in the Japanese language that one finds the most obvious manifestation. For the Japanese language, underpinned by Japan's geographical setting, takes a lonely position in the world's language classification. Edwards (1994) states that Japanese is one of the languages that we are unable to classify and calls it a 'language isolate.' (p.30)

One reason for the Japanese difficulty in learning foreign languages is that lack of contact with native speakers of other languages and cultures makes their second language learning more dependent on literature and grammar. Pragmatic problems are therefore frequently not addressed in the Japanese 'English as a Foreign Language' (EFL) classroom, primarily because the need for communication in English itself seldom arises within everyday life in Japan.

3.5.2. Honorifics – politeness expressions

Wardhaugh (1992) mentions that 'the Japanese are always described as being an extremely 'polite' people.' (p.278) An important linguistic difference between English and Japanese, in terms of expressions of politeness, lies in the fact that while in Japanese there is a complicated system of honorifics; in English there is not.

Complex use of honorifics is illustrated in a reference by Saville-Troike (1982) to the fact that there are seven different ways of offering tea in a Japanese home depending in each case on the person to whom it is offered.

With all these complicated formulas of *Keigo* (polite expressions and honorifics), it is generally agreed that Japanese learners of English do not generally feel at ease in social

interactions with English speakers. For example, when one says 'Tea is ready' then to the Japanese mind, each word of this expression must be chosen appropriately according to whom the speaker is talking. For example, tea is '*cha*' in plain Japanese, but '*o-cha*' when uttered politely with honorific prefix '*o*'. Also 'is ready' can be '*hairimashita*' expressed politely with the honorific '*mashita*', while '*haitta-yo*' is the more casual form. (pp.55-56)

What is important for Japanese learners of English, in choosing polite English expressions, is to accept that in English 'you' is 'you' and 'tea' is 'tea'. This may appear self-evident to the native speaker of English, but, for the Japanese, this presents a difficult problem causing anxiety or at least hesitation. In contrast to conventions associated with English, Japanese speakers rarely address superior interlocutors by first names, and omission of the second person pronoun (you) is natural, as other polite formulae in the same sentence can indicate its presence. To such a Japanese mind, just uttering the word 'you' to any interlocutor without hesitation, is in fact a great step of target language development.

In Japan the use of first name is limited to a very private group, such as family or childhood school friends, but on social occasions involving adults it is very rare that first names are used. Trying to be polite, learners may make mistakes or errors unintentionally, and may experience problems relating to their own identity. The only solution may be to know the difference between the customs or rules adequately, and then to move toward convergence, but not toward mere imposition of a target language cultural form on the learner. The aim of the teacher should be to help students to solve problems, both linguistically and pragmatically, rather than to cause an identity crisis for the students.

3.5.3. Indirectness

In *Meaning in Interaction,* Thomas (1995) writes:

'Indirectness occurs when there is a mismatch between the expressed meaning and the implied meaning. Indirectness is a universal phenomenon which as far as we know occurs in all natural languages.' (p.119)

Most cultures in the world, including the Japanese, use elaborate systems of indirectness rather than simple directness. This can sometimes lead to problems of understanding, or communication failure.

Failures are also caused by differences of Japanese and English customs when conversational routines are used. A convenient formula to express a request in Japanese is '*Yoroshiku onegai shimasu.*' In English it is usually translated as 'Thank you very much in advance.' But the literal meanings of the two sentences are quite different. *Yoroshiku* is an adverbial, polite form of 'good and well', meaning 'favourably' or 'with good manners'. '*Onegai shimasu*' is literally 'I hereby respectfully request (you)' - '*o'* is an honorific prefix, '*negai'* is a verb (*negau*) to mean 'wish, hope, ask, beseech, and request', '*shimasu*' is a polite form of 'to do'. In Japanese the word '*Yoroshiku*' can also be used for 'How do you do?', 'Nice to meet you', 'Please remember me to …', as well as 'Thank you very much in advance'. Japanese '*Yoroshiku onegai shimasu'* is a very broad and yet polite expression of performing a request, even though the word '*Yoroshiku*' (favourably) is a quite ambiguous word. However there is a huge gap between 'I am pleased to see you' and 'Thanking you so much in advance'.

Japanese speakers of English also tend to be misunderstood when they giggle, or introduce back-channelling signals into conversation, such as '*hai*', '*ee*' or '*so, so*'.

Once a colleague of the writer's, an American graduate male teacher, who was a sensitive person, could not tolerate his female students giggling and at one point even abandoned his class in fury. In this instance, the giggling was perceived as childish and provocative by the native English speaker/teacher, whereas, in reality, the laughter was probably in reaction to a stressful classroom situation. Japanese girl students do not usually realize that their giggling gives either childish or insulting impressions to others.

Even the simple word 'yes' serves different functions in English and Japanese. Japanese '*Hai*', supposedly equivalent to 'yes', can mean both an affirmative answer 'yes' or simply represent an acknowledgement that the speaker's words have been heard or understood. These different functions are often confused, especially if 'Yes' is the reply to a question. Tannen (1984) sees a further problem here:

'Now that commerce with Japan is widespread, there are frequent reports of frustration

by Americans because polite Japanese never say no. One must understand, from how they say yes, whether or not they mean it. Since Americans don't know the system, they don't know what signals to look for – even if they realize (which most do not) that yes often means no.' (p.194)

A further complication is caused by the fact that in Japanese an affirmative answer to a negative question, requires the word '*Hai*' or 'Yes', while English is ambiguous in this respect, the reply being largely determined by intonation and context.

Generally speaking, for Japanese people, to say 'Sorry' means something more than a mere apology. Nishiyama (1995) used the word 'lubricant' to explain various 'pat phrases' that the Japanese like to use. Japanese '*Sumimasen*' or '*Gomen-nasai*'(= 'I am sorry' or 'Excuse me.') expresses this type of mitigating social interaction, especially in a conflicting or embarrassing situation.

This observation is supported by Tannen (1998), who asserted that 'the Japanese apologize in conversation far more frequently than Americans.' She drew attention to the fact that:

'In Japan, when two cars are involved in a minor accident, both drivers bow and apologize. Americans are instructed by insurance companies never to admit fault, so we do not apologize even when we want to. But in Japan, neither apology entails taking the blame, since both drivers offer them. Furthermore, litigation for even minor accidents is common here and highly unusual in Japan.' (p.21)

As a result of this pragma-linguistic difference, Japanese travellers are nevertheless sometimes cautioned against saying sorry too quickly in foreign countries as their intention, to avoid appearing presumptuous or domineering, is likely to be misconstrued. Even so, Japanese speakers of English often say 'sorry', for example, when given a present, without recognising the communication failure. If both Japanese and English hearers knew of this difference, their communication would flow much more smoothly.

Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) mentioned another problem for effective communication:

'Apologizing appears to be associated with expressions of gratitude in some cultures. A Japanese participant (in the research) responded to the offer of a raise (of salary):

'I'm sorry. I will try harder in the future."

Another Japanese, in response to a $500 loan, said:

'I'm sorry. I'll always remember the debt of gratitude.' (p.74)

This illustrates the fact that there are not only language problems but also socio-cultural problems in human relationships. Apology is often taken as social lubricant. The same idea is applied to the meaning of argument. Japanese people tend to believe that argument is something to be avoided. When it comes to classroom situations, this can easily be a stress factor for students, also involving problems relating to differing notions about teacher-student roles and relationships. The issue of address terms exactly falls into this 'argument'. Simply to call a teacher by the first name is indeed a challenging psychological barrier or hurdle to an ordinary Japanese student. In the Japanese language deference should usually be expressed by not using the interlocutor's first name but by using a title such as '*sensei*' (teacher) or just by omitting the word 'you=*anata*' and adding various levels of particles to show respect at the end of a verb or sentence. One Japanese student once commented in a class on socio-linguistics that 'For a Japanese even to use the word 'you' in English is a very challenging action since it is failing to show respect', and in ordinary Japanese conversation it is replaced by other terms of address that are defined by specific relationships or, even frequently, omitted.

3.5.4. Japanese communication style

One of the most widely held Japanese views of their own language, to which Japanese-English communication problems are often attributed, is that Japanese do not particularly value verbal communication. This belief gives rise to associated notions regarding Japanese ineptitude in English communication, such as their being 'too polite', 'indirect', 'evasive', 'silent', 'lacking facial expression' or 'obsequious'. (Thomas, 1983, p.97, also see Barnlund (1975) cited by Clancy, 1986, p.214) In fact, this 'distrust' in verbal value, or high expectation of nonverbal mutual understanding (*sasshi*=empathy), is often used to justify incidents of Japanese communicative incompetence. The reason for this Japanese reluctance to use direct verbal communication, along with the tendency to leave something unsaid, can be explained by 'a really simple principle', as

Yule (1996) noted:

'...the more two speakers have in common, the less language they will need to use to identify familiar things.' (p.8)

In Japan, this shared knowledge is facilitated by the fact that, at least culturally and linguistically, the country remains a relatively homogeneous society. Also until recently, there were low levels of mobility that are associated with both an agrarian tradition, and a history of secure and permanent, life-long employment in the same company. This process has been further accelerated by the development of mass media communication. Hence the strong sense of familiarity among Japanese people, when contrasted with non-Japanese people, causes people to choose taciturnity rather than verbosity when there is no new information available. In such a dense, traditional, mutually related and family-based society as Japan, one must learn lots of conventional routine formulae to make everyday life run smoothly, rather than seek new ways of establishing social interaction between individuals. What is often required in Japan is to utter appropriate expressions in each new situation, remembering that the welfare of the group is more important than that of the individual. (Hendry 1987)

In countries such as Japan, Korea or Saudi Arabia, the so-called 'high-context-culture countries', greater value is placed on nonverbal than verbal communication. Silence is respected, conversational conventions are generally observed, consensus is emphasised and written agreements are interpreted with greater flexibility. It is in this context that pragmatic features, associated with Japanese communicative styles, must be considered. For example, the Japanese preference for indirectness can be explained as fulfilling the need to promote consensus.

In a similar manner, Clancy (1986) concludes:

'Clearly, the Japanese style of communication can work only in a rather homogeneous society in which people can actually anticipate each other's needs, wants and reactions.' (p.216)

This in turn is related to the emphasis on social cohesion, in which:

'The importance of empathy and conformity in Japanese culture gives rise, in turn, to certain characteristics of Japanese communicative style, such as the use of indirectness both in giving and refusing directives.' (p.245)

The communicative style, they argued, can be partly explained by the fact that Japanese mothers are always close to their babies, even at night, and satisfy their needs so that they hardly ever cry. On the other hand, research by Caudill and Weinstein (1974) found that Japanese mothers talk much less to their children than American mothers. Thus, by as early as 4 months of age, American and Japanese children are already being socialized with different patterns of communication.

In Japanese schools children seldom speak out during the classroom lesson, whilst in UK schools children often speak out during the class, asking questions and commenting on their teacher's remarks. One can infer from this that the Japanese communication aim is to reduce the amount of noise, whereas in the UK the aim is to enliven communication and help understanding. The difference lies in what motivates their communication, and that is generally determined by socio-cultural factors, although the large class size in Japan is also an important contributory factor.

Cortazzi and Jin (1997) used an example of Japanese communication style to raise another issue:

'Apparently simple words like 'yes' and 'no' can function quite differently in some cultures of communication. Among Japanese students, for example, many may say 'yes' simply to indicate that they hear and understand (but not necessarily to show agreement) while 'no' is very rarely used to express disagreement since this directness is thought to cause offence or loss of face. To say 'no' directly would seem, in Japan, to be a negative comment to the person rather than to their idea, opinion or request.' (p.80)

Obviously this can cause serious communication difficulties for Japanese students, which may influence the expression of their perception of stressful feelings.

3.5.5. Gratitude and indebtedness

There are of course not only language problems but also other socio-cultural problems in human relationships. Japanese people tend to believe that confrontation and argument is something to be avoided. Classroom situations can easily be a stress factor for students, sometimes involving problems relating to different notions about teacher-student roles and relationships. The issue of correct address terms is a good example of this problem. (Section 3.5.2.)

Coulmas (1981) explained that thanks and apologies for Japanese people are inherently similar. (p.73) He continued:

'In Japan, the smallest favour makes the receiver a debtor. Social relations can be regarded, to a large extent, as forming a reticulum of mutual responsibilities and debts. Not every favour can be repaid, and if circumstances do not allow proper repayment, Japanese tend to apologize. They acknowledge the burden of the debt and their own internal discomfort about it,' (p.88)

If Japanese speakers of English are to be encouraged to thank, rather than to apologise, they need to be aware that to say sorry in English is not completely equivalent to saying '*Sumimasen*' in Japanese.

Literally, '*Sumimasen*' means 'It is not finished,' the stem '*sumu*' meaning 'to finish, be over or to complete'. So the word '*Sumimasen*' actually suggests 'I owe you a certain favour or debts for which my repayment is not finished.'

In Japan '*Sumimasen*' is most commonly used to say 'Thank you', so that it fails to reveal the true range of meanings for this Japanese word. Benedict (1947, pp.98-112) devoted a chapter to the notion of 'indebtedness' or '*Onn*' in Japanese culture. She illustrated this diverse concept, which is still valid today, by applying it to such examples as 'a casual treat at the soda counter, or a year's long devotion of a father to his motherless children or the devotion of a faithful dog'. She then commented that Americans are not accustomed to judging these examples in terms of indebtedness. Benedict explained:

'Love, kindness and generosity, which we value just in proportion as they are given without strings attached, necessarily must have their strings in Japan.' (p. 112)

These strings have been spun out of the densely populated, monolithic and high context society of Japan. We must also remember that the world is changing all the time, and that the distance between Japan and the Western countries is getting closer and closer. The strings are therefore constantly under tension and sometimes unwind or even break. Although current life in Japan is constantly changing, these basic differences of expressing meaning are still a source of difficulty in cross-cultural situations today.

Overseas study is a cross-cultural learning experience. No doubt the gap between the home culture and the host culture may sometimes cause students to feel worry, bafflement or discomfort. The question whether Japanese students think these cross-cultural problems are very stressful, or not, will form part of the research.

3.6. Summary and the implications for the research

It is clear that overseas study is a cross-cultural learning experience. This implies that, while keeping to a whole person approach, in seeking to find a student's overall perceptions of stress, it is important to look at this stress from the tripartite angles of language problems, academic difficulties and other socio-cultural factors. It is necessary to remember constantly that these three areas are interrelated to each other to a great extent. There needs therefore to be a multi-faceted approach to the research. One also needs to keep in mind differences between the Japanese and English languages, cultures and academic systems, both to clarify and also evaluate research findings. There is a need to consider these findings in relation to the students own personalities and backgrounds, when considering any perceptions of stress encountered in their study or social experience in the UK. At the same time, it must be remembered that systems of language, education and culture are constantly changing, especially within the context of the globalization of recent years.

Chapter Five will apply these issues to the student context. Before this, the next chapter will provide a review of previous research and studies, including statistical information, on overseas study and international students.

Chapter Four. A Review of Existing Literature and Statistics on Overseas Study and International Students

4.1. Introduction

An important area, which was investigated before compiling the main questionnaire for this research, was that of existing studies about the experiences of international, and in particular Japanese, students in universities throughout the world. This helped the researcher to include in the questionnaire a wider range of possible stressful situations encountered by students, and also provided a basis for comparison of some results from the Japanese students' questionnaire with earlier studies.

In this chapter there are, first of all, some statistical facts about numbers of Japanese students in the UK in comparison with other international students. (4.2) Then follows a summary of reviews of existing literature about international students which looks at the adjustments necessary to minimize stress. (4.3 and 4.4) Special attention is given to difficulties in linguistic ability and the motivation of students to study abroad. (4.5 and 4.6) Finally there is a focus on Japanese students studying abroad and the national and personal influences which led to their decision to make this choice. (4.7) The next chapter (5) considers previous research into overseas students' problems and the issue of categorization.

It should be noted that until recent years the term 'overseas students' was in common use. It is now changed to 'international students' which will be mainly used in this thesis except where it is more appropriate or accurate to retain the earlier term. The Japanese word *Ryuugaku* (留学), which is often translated as 'study-abroad' as a noun, is another term for the same notion. There are some cases when this word is used in this thesis, especially in Chapter 11 as a direct translation of the word used for the stress/time graph headline.

The title UKCOSA used for the United Kingdom Council for the Overseas Students Affairs has also changed recently to UKCISA (United Kingdom Council for the International Students Affairs).

4.2. Statistical background – Japanese students in the UK

UNESCO's Statistical Yearbook (2004), at the time of the main survey, revealed that there were nearly two and a half million students who were engaged in programmes of overseas study. This figure was estimated to increase to up to 2.9 million students in 2008 (*Atlas of International Student Mobility:* website of Institute of International Education). The United Kingdom accepted the second largest percentage of international students, hosting about 13% of the total in tertiary level institutions in 2008, second only to the USA, which provided programmes of study for 20% in 2008. Other countries that accepted more than 100,000 international students were France (8%), Germany (8%), China (7%), Australia (7%), Canada (5%) and Japan (4%). An analysis of the ratio of international to home students reveals that international students comprised about 16 % of the student population in the UK, compared with only about 3.5 % in the USA. (ibid: '*Global Destinations for International Students at the Post-Secondary (Tertiary) Level.*' 2008)

According to statistics produced by the Overseas Students Trust, the number of foreign students in the UK has increased steadily since 1950, with the exception of a brief period during the Thatcher administration after its adoption of a full-cost fees policy in 1979. This policy shift was seen by many, including Williams (1984), as a major change for the British state system of post-secondary education. It also raised a moral question of accountability because of the steep increase in the cost of the service on offer to international students. From the institutional point of view the financial implications of this policy towards international students have been the dominant ones. Arguably this policy weakened the viability of institutions, in the medium term, when it proved difficult to recruit enough students to provide the finances for an adequate quality of provision in every subject. This led to widespread criticism of the Government, influenced by the moderate proposals of the Overseas Students Trust. Various remedial measures, including the 'Pym Package', were adopted to provide funding and scholarships from the UK government and other related organizations. The British Council's 'Study Abroad Fair' (*sic*) marked one such initiative designed to attract overseas students (the term at that time in use) to the UK (Williams (1984), Kimura (1991). As a result of these and other efforts, as recent on-line data provided by UKCISA (2008) indicates, the total number of international students in the UKHEIs reached 330,060 in 2005/06, a figure which represented 13% of the total number of

students in UK tertiary education.

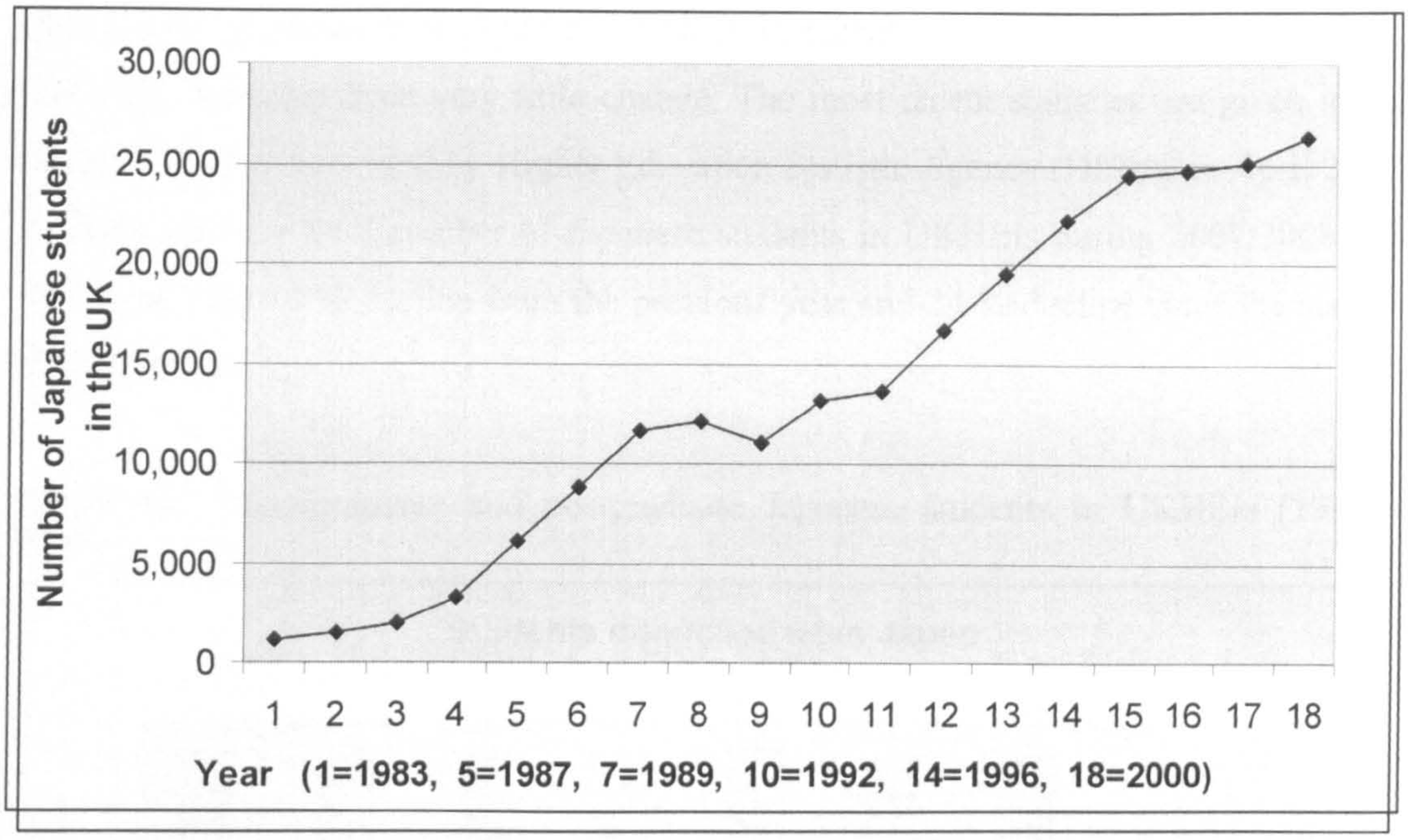
In the more specific case of Japanese students enrolled on courses in UKHEIs, Habu (2000, p.50) drew attention to the interesting relationship between fluctuations in the value of sterling against the Japanese yen and the number of students taking up courses of study. Her table gave the number of Japanese students in the UK between 1973 and 1996 in relation to average Japanese yen rates against sterling during the same period. In 1979, the year in which the full-fee policy was adopted, the number of Japanese students reached 3,900 (£1=¥465.57). It then declined sharply until 1982, when Japanese student numbers reached a low point of 2,900 (£1= ¥435.21). From that point, numbers began to increase as the value of sterling fell against the yen. While Habu's data was drawn from numbers of 'Japanese citizens given leave to enter the UK' cited from the Control of Immigrations Statistics (HMSO), online statistical data, presented by Japanese Ministry of Justice (March 2001), seems to corroborate some of these trends. Graph 4.1 below, for instance, shows the number of Japanese who were studying in the UK annually between 1983 and 2000. Differences between figures supplied here, and by the Control of Immigration Statistics, may reflect differences in defining 'students,' both in terms of length of stay, levels of study and age. Of course the need for good communication skills in English language, which is now essential with ever increasing globalization, has been a major factor in promoting overseas study both in the UK and other English speaking countries.

Table 4.1. Total number of Japanese students studying in the U.K. (1983-2000)

1983	1,146	1989	11,619	1995	19,494
1984	1,508	1990	12,061	1996	22,279
1985	1,995	1991	11,065	1997	24,495
1986	3,280	1992	13,156	1998	24,726
1987	6,089	1993	13,659	1999	25,026
1988	8,826	1994	16,729	2000	26,297

Percentage increase in 17 years = 2,195%
Source: Statistics on Japanese and non-Japanese Legal Migrants, 2000. The Judicial System and Research department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice (Mar., 2001)

Graph 4.1. Number of Japanese students studying for educational or training purposes or to learn technical skills in the U.K. (1983-2000)

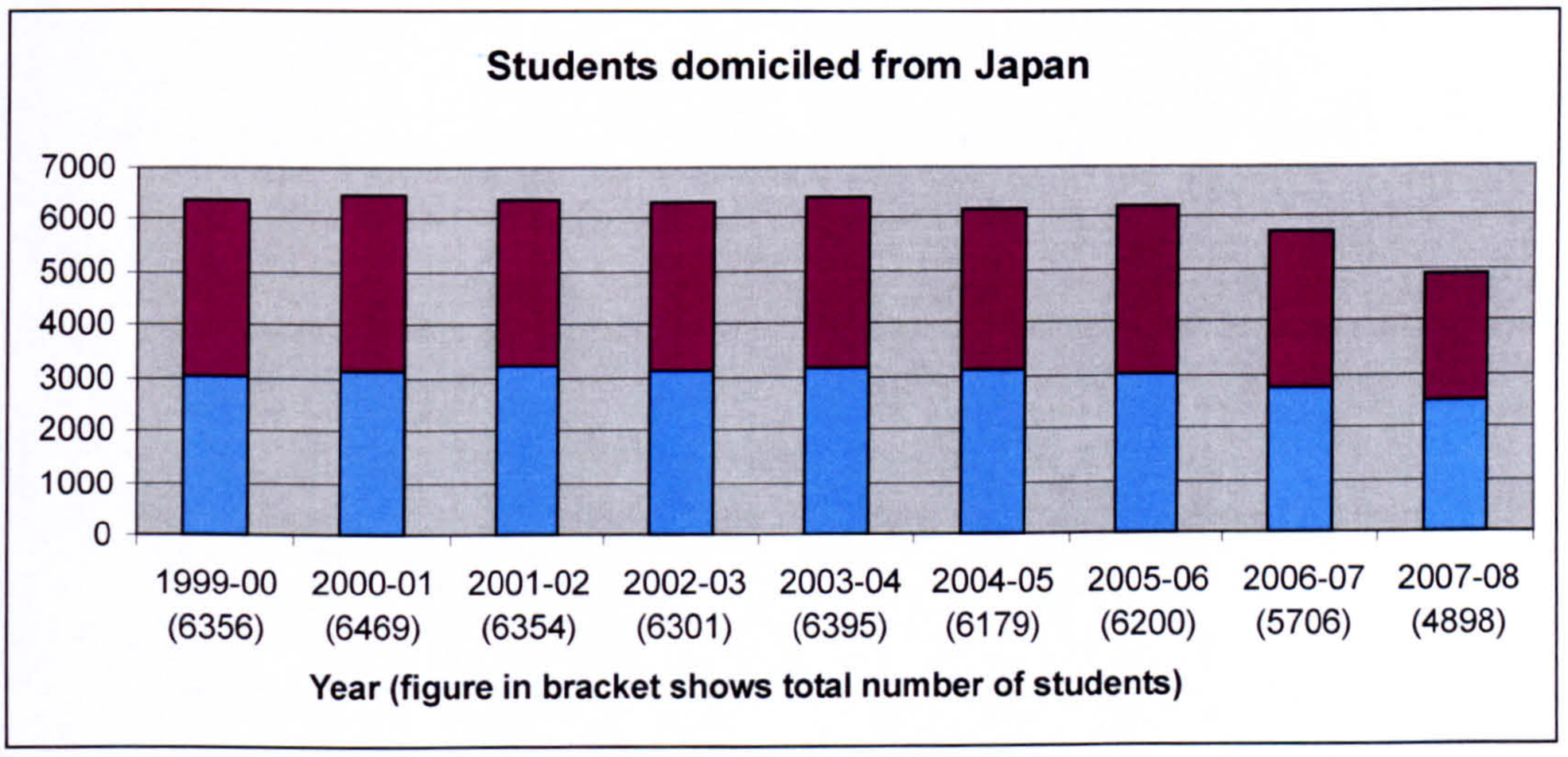


Source: Statistics on Japanese and non-Japanese Legal Migrants, 2000. The Judicial System and Research department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice (Mar., 2001)

The dramatic increase in student numbers charted by these statistics is also noteworthy in comparison with available data from other EU countries, which show that the UK has experienced the largest percentage of increase in students from Japan of all EU countries (France=593% and Germany=533%). Thus, while in 1984, Japanese students enrolled in UK tertiary education (HEIs) numbered only 332 (Kimura 1991: 59), placing Japan outside the top twenty countries of origin of overseas students, by 2000/01 this figure had climbed by 1,849% in 1984 to 6,470 (or 2.8% of the total overseas student population), making Japan the ninth largest non-EU contributor to the UK's overseas tertiary student population. The most recent figures from UKCISA, however, show that there was a slight decrease in the total figure of Japanese students from 2004/05 to 2005/06. This can probably be partly explained by the fact that the number of those who reached tertiary education stage in Japan has radically decreased. This caused a serious student recruitment problem among Japanese universities and colleges. In April 2009, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (Website) in Japan announced that the number of children, aged less than 15, was 17.14 million and has been decreasing for 28 years. The percentage of children in the total population

was 13.4 %. This percentage has kept going down for 35 years, and is one of the lowest levels among the 31 major countries in the world, which partly explains the decrease of the number of Japanese students in UKHEIs in recent years. However between 2000 and 2007 there has been very little change. The most recent statistics are given in the Graph 4.2 below provided by Higher Education Statistic Agency (HESA) in April 2009. It shows that the total number of Japanese students in UKHEIs during 2007/2008 was 4898, showing 14 % decline from the previous year and 24 % decline since the start of the millenium.

Graph 4.2. Undergraduate and postgraduate Japanese students in UKHEIs (1999 – 2008)



Source: HESA (2009). The separation of each bar chart shows postgraduate students (bottom) and undergraduate students (top).

The actual research with Japanese students took place between April 2002 and March 2005. The students involved were from a number of different intake years, so it is sensible to look at official HESA statistics, over a number of years, for students in UKHEIs domiciled from Japan. This shows that the intake each academic year is remarkably consistent in the four years between 2000 and 2004. The average for this period is 6380. The most up-to-date figures available from HESA are given in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2. Japanese students in UKHEIs in 2007/2008 by gender, mode and level of study

Level of study	Postgraduate		Postgraduate Total	Undergraduate		Under-graduate Total	Total
Mode of study	Full-time	Part-time		Full-time	Part-time		
Female	957	412	1369	1373	197	1570	2939
Male	718	404	1122	759	78	837	1959
Total	1675	816	2491	2132	275	2407	4898

Source: HESA 04.2009 (Students domiciled from Japan (2007/08) arranged in a table by the writer.)

The ratios between female and male students have been very similar throughout these years, with an average of 62 % female and 38 % male students.

4.3. Altbach's 'Notes on the literature'

In 1991, *Higher Education* published a special issue on foreign study and international students (Vol. 21). Altbach's contribution contains a section of 'notes on the literature' up to that date that he and his colleagues had examined. According to Altbach (p.308), despite the fact that many thousands of studies about international students had been published since 1970, it was necessary to expand the research base both to help students, and also to formulate enlightened and effective policies.

The following table represents a simplified summary of his review, arranged by the current researcher.

Table 4.3. Summary of Altbach's (1991) literature review of previous research into overseas study.

Established approaches, agents and areas of enquiry	Approaches, agents and areas in need of further investigation
(1) Agency-oriented, large scale research (2) Educational research studies into policies and programmes (3) Adjustment studies by psychologists and counsellors (4) Research in industrialized countries (5) Small-scale, doctoral studies	(1) Comprehensive research from a student centred perspective (2) Research related to Third World sending countries (3) Individual problems faced by foreign students (which have received only limited attention in the research literature). (4) Experiences from Russia and Eastern Europe, which are currently unobtainable.
Features of existing studies	**Features of studies required**
(1) Peripheral, recently emerged (2) Fairly substantial, but skewed (3) Applied / Atheoretical (4) Tend to be related to cross-cultural, psychological and adjustment issues (5) Existing research base limited in terms of countries analysed, questions asked, and paradigms used.	(1) Must take into account the needs and perspectives of major sending nations. (2) Acknowledge the impact of foreign study on individuals, as foreign students are themselves differentiated by many factors in addition to their nationality.

Elsewhere, Altbach (1989) also mentioned that 'the issues relating to foreign students and international study are complex and wide-ranging'. (p.125) Also that 'foreign study is a multifaceted issue and it is important to see it in its many ramifications'. (p.127) His approach was derived from those applied in the fields of international and comparative education, and what he emphasised was the need to separate policy and

programme issues relating to international study, and studies of international students themselves. With this in mind, the current study is aimed at representing issues from Japanese students' perspectives and macroscopic policy, and programme studies therefore lie outside the scope of this investigation. Altbach concluded:

'It can be seen that foreign students have a variety of impacts – on host institutions, on home countries and on the international transfer of knowledge. .....Clearly, issues of adjustment, health, finances, the curriculum, the experience of a foreign culture and other factors play a role.' (p.320)

As Altbach noted, certain prominent areas have been subject to frequent investigation. The areas which are related to the present research are studies in (1) 'cultural adjustment', (2) 'language learning' and (3) 'motivation largely relating to gender differences.' These three areas will now be considered in the following three sections.

4.4. Studies on cultural adjustment

Ward, Bochner and Furnam's (2001) *Psychology of Culture Shock* provided an extensive review of studies in this field. Summing up the enormous volumes of empirical research on 'student sojourners', they categorised the following five areas as those most frequently discussed:

(1) Interpersonal and inter-group relations
(2) The problems of international students
(3) The intercultural classroom
(4) Longitudinal studies of international student adaptation
(5) Re-entry

In summing up the chapter on student sojourners with regard to their psychological and socio-cultural adjustment, adaptation, and acculturation, Ward, Bochner and Furnham made the following observations:

'Studies show that international students experience a wide range of problems, particularly those relating to academic pressures, financial resources, friendship development and culture-specific aspects of sojourning. Some of the most significant

problems arise from the academic environment and because international students must engage in 'culture-learning' as well as intellectual endeavours to achieve academic success. Student and teacher expectations, the patterns of classroom interaction and even perceptions and definitions of intelligence, vary across different cultures.' (p.166)

Although *Psychology of Culture Shock* represents an extensive scholarly investigation in a vast area of adjustment studies, the question remains as to whether adjustment approaches can account for the full range of international students' experiences, including their learning processes and the affective engagement with the host culture. Altbach certainly argued that adjustment studies alone cannot cope with multifaceted aspects of overseas students as individuals. An investigation into the students' experiences, the quality of their learning, and their own development and growing personalities, as well as evaluation of the experience itself, must include different perspectives and not just that of 'adjustment'. One of the reasons why adjustment-oriented researchers try to separate psychological adjustment issues (affective factors) from socio-cultural adaptation issues (behavioural or culture learning factors) lies here. Being an international student does not simply mean adjusting to a study milieu, since that is not the sole purpose of study in a foreign country. As a result, a holistic or whole-person approach (Maslow 1954) is more likely to yield important and more rigorous insights into the experiences of international students.

Relating to these issues, a table reporting 18 research projects, which represent only a small selection of such reports, is given in the Appendix I. The studies in this list were, in most cases, dependent on students' answers to questionnaires. A study by Yao and Matsubara (1990) found that international students in Japan experience more stress than Japanese home students in six kinds of life stresses. They were the high price of commodities, their failure to gain a scholarship, the unstable political situation in their own country, graduation, the form of the teachers' lectures and the lack of communication with local residents. Another similar study in Japanese universities (Tanaka et.al. 1994) found that Asian students were generally less well adjusted than Western and Latin American students. Surprisingly, those more proficient in Japanese did not always adjust more easily. Another similar study by Matsubara and Ishikuma (1993) found that the major areas, where foreign students in Japan frequently sought help, were those of language and finance whilst they rarely consulted counsellors or advisors about their human relationships problems.

A longitudinal study in Ward et al (1998) of Japanese students in New Zealand carried out at four intervals during their course found that problems of adjustment were greatest at the time of entry and decreased with time. Tomioka (2001) investigated Japanese students, who had studied abroad for less than two months, and found that those who had made friends with a wider range of people gained more satisfaction from their study abroad. Furukawa and Shibayama (1994) studied Japanese high school students, on an international exchange programme, and found, as one would expect, that their competence in the language of the host country was most influential in their adjustment to a new community, whilst Sorimachi (1994) had also found through a similar survey that all the Japanese high school students questioned had experienced counter-culture shock when returning to Japan. Furukawa and Shibayama (1993) had also found, through an earlier study of Japanese high school students studying abroad on home stay programmes for one year, that the three strongest predictors of mal-adjustment taken from a number of variable factors assessed before departure, were neuroticism, poor maternal care before the age of 16 and lack of friendship availability in Japan.

It is believed that the first use of the term 'culture shock' was by Oberg (1960) when writing about the experiences of US missionaries in Brazil. He considered that 'culture shock' was a kind of disease and studied its nature, symptoms and the means of recovery from its effects. In 1995 Furnam and Alibhai studied the friendship networks of international students at London University and found that the data given to them revealed a strong preference for co-national friends first, other overseas friends second and host-national friends third. Pugh and Fenelon (1988) found that international students had a three-fold adjustment to make: linguistic, educational and cultural (p.310). Westwood and Barker (1990) conducted a longitudinal study of two groups of overseas students in Canada and Australia from 1984 to 1987: those who participated in a peer pairing programme and those who did not. They found that overall achievements rates were higher, and drop-out rates lower, for students who had experienced this matching programme with host-national students in their first year. Kagan and Cohen's (1995) study of the cultural adjustment of international students in the USA found that this was simultaneously influenced by the language spoken at home, the previous employment level, having both American and native friends, and the ability to make decisions and to value work. A study by Liberman (1994) of Asian students in American universities found that they greatly appreciated freedom of choice in their

courses, and the democratic structure of teacher-students interaction, whilst criticising the informality and lack of respect in their relationships with teachers. Finally Zimmerman (1995) found that international students in the Mid-West of the USA believed that talking with American students was the single most important factor in developing communication competency and adjusting to the American way of life.

In summary, most of the adjustment studies quoted here tend to focus on students problems about ways of socializing or making human relationships; such as to whom they should ask for help, or how their friendship patterns should develop. What this research is trying to find out is how far, and in what kind of situations, Japanese students actually feel difficulties and experience stress and how they try to cope with these problems.

4.5. Studies on language learning

Oberg's (1960) classic essay on 'culture shock' emphasized the importance of improving language learning as a coping strategy which, by enabling foreigners to communicate with the people of the host country, helps them to get over any culture shock as quickly as possible (p.182).

In spite of the significance attached to this issue, surprisingly few studies have attempted to grapple with the issue of language as a central concern for international students. This is perhaps because these studies have tended to deal with general problems of international students, rather than differentiating between nationalities. Yet such a focus fails to account for the fact that huge linguistic differences exist even among Asian students. Those from Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Pakistan, or India, for example, are likely to have quite different linguistic, as well as cultural, backgrounds from students from Japan, China, Taiwan or Korea who have far looser linguistic and cultural ties to the UK than countries belonging to the Commonwealth Nations in which English is widely used in education and commerce as a lingua franca.

Some later studies have attempted to investigate Japanese students' experiences of learning English as a foreign language. One area of particular interest relates to short-term English language programmes abroad. Researchers looking into the experiences of these learners found that overseas study experiences, even for a short period, exert a

positive influence on students' motivation towards learning the language and about the culture, as well as on their future expectations. The improvement of their English level has been identified as relatively high soon after the programmes, but the long-term influence has not yet been established (Higuchi, et al. (1982), Yamane (1985), Yamamoto, H (1992), Iwakiri, et.al.(1992), Iwakiri (1993), Tomioka (2001)).

When international students' problems are discussed, language problems are mentioned, as one of many students' problems, but are rarely examined by adjustment researchers in detail. Instead, such studies tend to refer to psychological problems or to human relationships patterns. However, Japanese students seem to need specific attention to language problems more than anything else, as was mentioned in the previous section. Both linguistic and pragmatic reasons can ratify this point. As a result the questionnaire used in this research devoted equal attention to language, academic, and socio-cultural problems. Clearly without detailed investigation into language difficulties, the problems of Japanese students in UKHEIs will never be comprehensively and appropriately understood. The language problems, especially those related to Japanese learners of English, will be dealt with in detail in the following chapter.

4.6. Studies on motivation

Motivation is clearly a very important factor when considering international students' experiences. Several studies of motivation have adopted a gender-based approach. Some studies have paid special attention to the growing number of Japanese women choosing to go abroad to study. (Ueno (1992), Nishio (2001), Habu (2000), Kelsky (2001)) Not surprisingly, all these studies have been conducted by female writers. Such studies often portray Japanese women as those who choose to study abroad as a means of fleeing from the constraints of their society. However, such studies fail to account for the motives of the growing population of male Japanese overseas students, or the fluctuations in numbers of both male and female students attending UKHEIs.

Walker's (1998) views on the topic of motivation seem to cover a fairly comprehensive range of answers irrespective of gender difference. She summarised her own thesis mentioning several factors which explain why Japanese people chose UKHEIs at that time. These are 'the designer quality of UK education', 'the power of yen', 'a view of education as an investment, which is common to other Asian countries', 'wider chances

of admission to courses such as a foundation or a year-abroad programme in the UK', 'rejection of entrance examination hell in Japan', 'more flexibility in courses and curricula in the UK', and 'the desire to acquire alternative value systems, denying an image of a xenophobic nation' as well, of course, as 'the learning of English language.'

4.7. Overseas study – A Japanese perspective

4.7.1. Overseas study opportunities before 1900 in Japan

Japan has long been more of a net sender rather than a recipient of overseas students. This was the case in each of the fifteen centuries leading up to the end of the 19th century. This discrepancy was greatly influenced by Japan's position as an island nation situated, like Great Britain, near a continental landmass which had developed its own dominant civilisation from prehistoric days. The growth and spread of Buddhism were important in reinforcing this tendency, and had a significant influence on many aspects of cultural exchange. Buddhism was first transmitted to Japan in the early 6th century (ca. 538) and it was mainly for the purpose of absorbing Buddhism that students were first sent overseas to study.

To put it succinctly, whilst learning more about Buddhism was a main motive for promoting foreign study in ancient Japan (7th – 9th centuries), rejecting Christianity was the main motive for the policy of national seclusion in the later period. From middle to early modern ages, people in Japan were prohibited from going abroad to study. If the decree was broken, the penalty was as severe as exile or death. When the Tokugawa Government (1601-1868) had to open up the country after the Japan-US Amity Treaty (1854) was ratified, after pressure by powerful western nations, people who were more aware of the outside world began seeking opportunities to go abroad. However, it was the government, rather than individuals, which led the drive to obtain advanced knowledge and techniques from western countries in order to strengthen the nation both financially and militarily.

In his well-documented book, Ishizuki (1992) counted as many as 148 Japanese people who went abroad to study during the six years from 1862 to 1867, coinciding with a tumultuous period of decline for the Tokugawa feudal government. Among these students were 63, who were sponsored officially by the government, and about the same

number (62) who were sent by local progressive clans. The countries they went to included England (58), U.S.A. (47), France (34) and Holland (18).

The same trend continued after the Meiji Restoration. In the fourth year of the Meiji Era, 1871, the huge Iwakura Mission (50 delegates and 60 students) was launched and travelled throughout the world for nearly two years, taking five girls, including Ume Tsuda, to the USA. She studied in Washington D.C. from the age of 6 to 17. She greatly valued her experience and in 1900 she founded one of the first female private universities in Japan 'Tsuda College'. In 1872, however, mainly for financial reasons, the new government had to give up its policy of funding such students, and ordered the return to Japan of those who were studying abroad at the time. Fortunately girls in the USA were exempted. The following year (1873), however, funding was again available under a new regulation of an Education Act which allowed more than 3,000 students to study abroad between its implementation and the beginning of Showa era (1925) (Okihara, 2001). One of these students, Soseki Natsume, at the age of 33 in 1900, came to study in London for two years. He became a professor of English at Tokyo University and later a novelist who through his novels challenged many contemporary ideas in Japanese culture.

However, according to Ishizuki (1992), problems associated with the policy were many and diverse. First of all, the costs of the programme soared, at one point accounting for more than ten per cent of the whole budget of the Ministry of Education. Secondly, the selection of candidates was inconsistent. Some aristocrats, for example, were selected through personal influence and not all students were sufficiently well-qualified or motivated. As a result, the programme was often considered disappointing as well as costly. The previous academic experience of some candidates was insufficient, as was the language instruction they had received. This was partly attributable to the absence of a Japanese education system, either at an elementary, secondary or tertiary level. Also, the selection process was partial, with students from certain areas gaining priority. Dominant clans were also overrepresented. As a result, Ishizuki (1992) observed that the 'quantitative increase of students abroad was accompanied by a qualitative decline in study outcome.' (p.212, translated by the writer)

However, it must also be acknowledged that Japanese modernisation, especially in terms of the political change from feudalism to constitutional government, was

facilitated by this massive flow of students to foreign countries, particularly Europe and America, to learn from advanced skill and knowledge, techniques and social systems. The success of the programme, during this period, could not be understood, in its full sense, without looking at the Japanese political context and at how individual students on returning played their part in contributing to national development.

4.7.2. Overseas study opportunities after 1900 in Japan

There is no doubt that World War II, and its aftermath, caused a complete break in this tendency towards a gradual increase of overseas students. Here, again, the overseas study programme played a crucial role in Japan's development. This was enhanced by a national policy, but not one of Japan's own creation. It was rather the USA, the winning side in the Pacific War, which established and implemented new programmes of study. In 1949 the first cohort of 50 Japanese students went to the U.S.A. to study, under a scheme funded by the GARIOA (Government and Relief in Occupied Areas) Fund. Similar aid was provided by the EROA (Economic Rehabilitation in Occupied Areas) Fund. Those who were selected were very eager to use the experience in order to contribute to the recovery and development programmes at home (Inoue, 1996). The GARIOA & EROA Funds, the following year, enabled 283 people to study in the USA, 471 in 1951, and 293 in 1952, amongst whom 31 were supported by the Fulbright Scholarship. It should be noted here that J. W. Fulbright (1905-95), an American politician and scholar, was inspired to propose this world wide study-abroad programme when he heard the tragic news of the atomic bombs, which devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 (Inoue 1996). Since then, the Fulbright Scholarship Programme has enabled more than 6000 Japanese people to study in the USA. These students have subsequently, according to Inoue (1996), had an enormous influence on post-war political, economic and technological development in Japan. These programmes may also account for the high percentage of Japanese students who still choose the USA in preference to other recipient countries.

One Japanese student in the USA at this period of time (the early half of the 20th century) wrote that she felt as if she were an expert tennis player entered in a croquet tournament. Benedict (1947) continued:

'Her own expertise did not count. She felt that what she had learned did not carry over

into the new environment. The discipline to which she had submitted was useless (in the USA). Americans got along without it.' (p.227)

From 1960s onward, the number of students taking advantage of these and other schemes, or making their own arrangements, began to increase dramatically. No longer could the phenomenon be linked directly to central government policy. This trend, in turn, seems likely to continue as a result of the need for promoting English as the language of globalisation. Another key feature of current trends is that the number of those who go abroad to study, without official or public financial support, has grown to such an extent that this group now represents the majority. This can be explained as part of a trend towards privatisation. As Walker (1997) pointed out, in her thesis, education in Japan is viewed partly as a matter of private investment, as well as being the government's responsibility, since many fee-paying private schools have been established nationwide from pre-school to tertiary level. Japanese private schools complement the rigidity and limitation of the public education system in many ways. In fact both globalization and privatisation are keywords to understand features of contemporary trends in foreign study among Japanese students.

Statistics provided by the Websites of the Japanese Judicial System and Research Department of the Ministry of Justice showed that the number of individuals who were studying abroad for educational or training purposes or learning technical skills was only 1,907 in 1965, whilst by 2000, this figure had increased by more than a hundredfold to 193,779. (PDF files (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6)).

As for the destination of these students, the top country was the USA, as mentioned earlier. 87,157 people (45%) went to U.S.A. for various study purposes in 2000. Besides the USA, four other countries received more than 10,000 Japanese students in 2000. They were the UK. (26,297, 14%), China (14,072, 7%), Canada (12,430, 6%) and Australia (10,369, 5%). Except China, all other major hosting countries of Japanese students were English speaking countries, and the four English speaking countries, already mentioned, accounted for 70 % of all Japanese students going to study abroad (136,253 people). This certainly supports the view that language learning, here English, is one of the main motives for studying abroad. It is also a reflection of the quality of academic achievement in the English-speaking world. In contrast, most of the overseas students in Japan came from China and Korea. (PDF files: ibid.)

The increase in international students from Japan, at the end of the twentieth century, raises issues regarding not only the balance between quality and quantity, but also many additional questions. In order to have a clearer view of problems encountered when studying abroad, it is necessary to shift this enquiry to another dimension. To conclude this brief historical sketch, it can be observed that government-backed programmes of the early twentieth century have largely given way to individual and private initiatives. 'Who's afraid of studying abroad!' is a restatement of 'where there is a will, there is a way.' (Inoue 1996) There is also a comment by Altbach (1991) that 'it is very important to keep in mind that the most important decisions concerning study abroad (*sic*) are made by individuals and families and only indirectly by governments, academic institutions, and aid agencies because most foreign students are privately funded.' (p.309) Crossing country borders may become much easier in the future. The world is currently experiencing a revolutionary change in information technology. International study seems to be part of this process, and students frequently find themselves in less formal programmes of study.

4.8. Summary and implications

The existing literature on studying abroad shows that international students experience a wide range of problems particularly those relating to academic pressures, financial resources, friendship development and other culture-specific aspects of living overseas. There has been an emphasis on better ways of socialization and improving human relationships. All these problems were found to vary across different cultures. However adjustment to a new study system is not the only purpose for international students. This indicates that a whole person approach is necessary to give a more accurate insight into the experiences of international students.

The earlier studies have tended to deal with general problems rather than differentiation between the nationalities or an examination of the issue of language as a central concern for international students. There have been very few studies specifically about the problems of Japanese students. There has however been an increase of over two thousand percent in the number of Japanese students in the UK since statistics were first recorded. This is roughly four times the percentage increase of Japanese students in France and Germany. Prominent researchers have now pointed to the need to expand

the research base to obtain a full understanding of the complex results of foreign study. The present research, while following a whole person approach, is also trying to find out how far and in what kind of situations Japanese students, in the UK, experience difficulties, feel stress and make use of coping strategies.

As it has been explained earlier in this chapter, the next chapter will be concerned with previous research into international students' problems with a focus on Japanese students wherever possible.

Chapter Five. Overseas Students' Problems and the Issue of Categorization

5.1. Introduction

This chapter examines existing studies that deal with Japanese and international students' problems in their overseas study. It deals, in turn, with language problems, academic problems and socio-cultural adjustment problems in a new environment. Each subsection is separately introduced and summarized. By reviewing related literature and previous research, the chapter seeks to link the relationship between the theoretical framework and the actual research questions to be used in order to reveal Japanese students' problems.

As indicated in Chapter 3, there are always decisions to be made about categorization when planning research. Some studies regard language problems as mainly socio-cultural, some focus on communication, and others on personal factors. For example, Gil and Katsara's (199 9) conclusion, after their review of existing literature about international students' problems is that: 'the problems are manifold and overlapping, but many may be described within three broad categories: language, academic and personal.' (p.2) Furnham (1997) also uses a tripartite categorization of international students' problems, but differs in the way he divided the three sub-topics: 'Problems facing the foreign student are threefold: problems of living in a foreign culture (racial discrimination, language problems, accommodation difficulties, separation reactions, dietary restrictions, financial stress, loneliness, etc.), problems of late-adolescents / young adults asserting their emotional and intellectual independence, and the academic problems associated with higher educational study.' (p.14)

5.2. Language problems - introduction

In Section 3.4 some of the main differences between the English and Japanese languages have already been considered. The literature on international students in UKHEIs sometimes addresses language problems with a serious linguistic or pragmatic approach and at other times with little critical attention. This is probably mainly because international students do not form a single homogenous group, but one

containing many nationalities each with a different language and culture. Language problems of American students, for example, should sometimes be treated differently from those of European or East Asian students, because of their linguistic and cultural differences. Even among Asian students, the language problems of those from Commonwealth nations, where there is usually far greater exposure to the English language and culture, must often be understood differently from those from other East Asian countries. There are even differences of language problems among Chinese, Korean and Japanese students, due to the differences of their native languages in relation to English. Chinese language has an SVO structure, whereas Japanese and Korean have an SOV structure. Furthermore, even within one nationality, individual differences in levels of English, past experiences abroad and previous English education in the students' own countries will also be factors in determining students' feelings of difficulty or their stress perceptions. Language problems need to be explored in relation to all these various factors and backgrounds and not merely by using the more general factor of nationality. In section 5.2.1 below, the following studies are going to be examined. These are by Amoh (1984), Yamamoto, T. (1986), Yao and Matsubara (1990), Allen and Higgins (1994) and Choi (1997), of which those of Yamamoto, T and Yao and Matsubara are only available in Japanese so that all the quotations of the relevant selected passages have been translated by the present writer.

5.2.1. A review of research into language problems

Since Yamamoto's (1986) study, which was funded by the Japanese Education Ministry, is one of only a very few examples of research that deals with a topic very similar to this thesis, it is helpful to examine this in more detail. In this study, the subjects of investigation were 96 Japanese students who went abroad to study, all sponsored by the Japanese Ministry of Education. The countries in which they studied were the USA, West Germany, Australia, Canada, India, the UK, France, China and Korea. The survey consisted of 99 questions which were given at four different times to all 96 students. 48 (22 males and 26 females including 33 undergraduates and 15 postgraduates) of the 96 students responded on all the four occasions.

The following six factors were identified as areas of adjustment difficulty using the students' own evaluation.

(i) The teaching and assessment of their study and research

(ii) Physical and mental health

(iii) Progress in their study and research

(iv) Customs and habits – different life styles

(v) Language

(vi) Human relationships

Table 5.1 below shows that, at the start of the course, students' perception of language difficulty ranks second (Mean=3.34), slightly lower than the result for the difficulties in human relationships (Mean=3.41). Although the language factor becomes the most difficult area three months later, after both 6 months and 9 months later human relationship difficulties are again slightly higher. It should be noted that, after three months, perception of difficulties of progress in study/research were found to be even higher than difficulties in human relationships, and after nine months about equal.

Table 5.1. Levels of adjustment difficulties of Japanese students in overseas universities (Yamamoto, T.)

	(1) Teaching & evaluation	(2) Physical and mental health	(3) Progress in learning and research	(4) Different life style and customs	(5) Language	(6) Human relationships
	Mean / SD	Mean / SD	Mean / SD	Mean / SD	Mean / SD	Mean / SD
Start of course	2.26 / 0.60	2.32 / 0.73	2.89 / 0.60	2.61 / 0.64	3.34 / 0.54	3.41 / 0.83
3 months later	2.19 / 0.71	2.24 / 0.74	2.91 / 0.68	2.30 / 0.60	2.99 / 0.58	2.82 / 0.74
6 months later	2.18 / 0.77	2.17 / 0.61	2.76 / 0.55	2.25 / 0.73	2.71 / 0.59	2.86 / 0.69
9 months later	2.12 / 0.68	2.05 / 0.70	2.62 / 0.47	2.22 / 0.47	2.51 / 0.53	2.61 / 0.71
Overall Mean	2.19	2.20	2.80	2.35	2.89	2.92

Source: Yamamoto, T. (1986, p.587). Levels were measured at three months intervals using a scale from 5 (Very difficult) to 1 (Not at all difficult).

The 9 question items used in this survey to determine the overall mean stress levels of language areas were as follows:

(i) I have a problem of speaking the language of this country.

(ii) I do not understand lectures given in the language of this country.

(iii) I do not understand what the students' prospectus / handbook says.

(iv) I do not have enough vocabulary of the language of this country.

(v) I cannot write well using the language of this country.

(vi) I do not understand textbooks written in the language of this country.

(vii) I do not understand about this country well and I am troubled by this.

(viii) I have a difficulty in making my pronunciation understood.

(ix) I cannot do shopping as easily as I would wish.

Some of these questions will be included in the main questionnaire of this research. However, it has to be borne in mind that items (2), (3), (5), and (6) are also closely related to academic problems, whilst (7) and (9) are related to socio-cultural problems. What Yamamoto's (1986) study did not reveal was to consider how differences in the level of English affected the students' feelings of difficulty. The objective data of students' English level will therefore be included in the main investigation.

Yao and Matsubara's (1990) study, which deals with a similar topic, is also only available in the Japanese language. The uniqueness of their study in Japan is that they compared overseas students' problems with those of home university students. The respondents were 192 international students living in Japan and 163 Japanese home students. After the pilot research 45 life stressor situations were selected for the main questionnaire.

In all 45 question-items, factor analysis identified six areas of stressful events for all respondents. International students studying in Japan identified the order of difficulty of these six factors as follows:

(i) Illness or death of family or friends (Mean=4.23, SD=0.90)

(ii) Language problems (Mean=3.51, SD=1.10)

(iii) Problems related to everyday life (Mean=3.48, SD=0.82)

(iv) Academic problems (Mean=3.46, SD=0.85)

(v) Human relationships problems (Mean=2.84, SD=0.76)

(vi) Problems arising from environmental differences (Mean=2.70, SD=0.80)

The term 'language problems' was subdivided into:

(1) Lack of language ability
(2) Inability to improve language ability
(N.B. foreign language for Japanese students)

It was found that the sub-group of students having a higher Japanese language ability showed more stressful feelings than those with lower ability in three significant areas relating to employment, separation from family, and the high prices in Japan. Yao and Matsubara (1990) explained that students of higher Japanese language ability usually stayed longer in Japan; hence these three non-linguistic problems often caused more stressful feelings. This is an important point that should be taken into consideration when overseas students' problems are examined in detail. Stressful feelings can be complex and do not necessarily arise from just one factor. Yao and Matsubara (1990) gave this explanation:

'Each life stressor varies not only because an individual's appraisal is different in the recognition of its gravity, but also because a life-stressor seems to have a multi-dimensional structure made up of various areas with different components.' (p.7)

This reinforced the decision to include follow-up questionnaires and face-to-face interviews in the research to be undertaken.

A summary of the results of these two studies shows that whilst language problems of many international students were often quite stressful, they were not always the most severe among the difficulties they encountered.

Allen and Higgins (1994) investigated the motivations and experiences of 989 international students from 14 countries on UK undergraduate courses. They found that 'when asked in an open question to indicate the main problem they had encountered so far, over one third (34.5%) of respondents chose academic problems, English language difficulties came second (14%) and financial problems third (11%)' (p.68-69). This is shown in the table below.

Table 5.2. The most significant problem faced by international students (Base: 989)

Most significant problem faced	No.	%
Academic problems	341	35
English Language problems	140	14
Financial problems	111	11
Mixing with home (UK) students	86	9
Adapting to different study methods	73	7
The weather	53	5
Finding suitable accommodation	40	4
Adapting to UK culture /customs	33	3
Feeling homesick	29	3

Source: Allen and Higgins (1994, p.69) N.B. In the table above the authors only gave the most significant problems faced by 906 of 989 international students. They gave only the ten most common significant problems.

However analysis, carried out separately for each country, showed that difficulty with English language was the most significant problem for Japan (33%) and Taiwan (36%) but only for 14% in the total sample at the time of the survey. At the start of the courses, English language was a concern for 56% of Japanese respondents compared with only 48 % overall. (pp.65-66)

At the time of the survey Japanese students were also experiencing difficulty mixing with home (UK) students, (49% compared 29% of the total sample). 17% of Japanese students said that mixing with home (UK) students was the most significant problem which they had faced so far compared with 9 % of the overall sample.

Difficulties experienced with the English language, according to Allen and Higgins (ibid), are shown in the following table.

Table 5.3. Types of English language difficulties. (Base: 437)

	No.	%
Written English: writing essays/reports	245	56
Written English: reading skills	87	20
Listening to English: dialect	173	40
Listening to English: slang	223	51
Listening to English: accent	225	52
Listening to English: speaking too fast	218	50
Spoken English: making myself understood	136	31
Have not experienced any difficulties	38	9
Other difficulties with English	17	4

Source : Allen and Higgins (1994, p.60)

Amoh's (1984) research investigated international students' problems in a university in the USA. This unpublished PhD dissertation surveyed the changing perception of 64 international students' problems from autumn 1982, at the time of beginning their course, to spring 1983. His questionnaire (77 questions) had 26 academic, 23 social and 28 personal questions. Language problems were not treated as a discrete category and some language problems were included in the academic area. They were:

(1) Giving oral reports in class.
(2) My ability to write in English
(3) My ability to understand English
(4) My ability to read textbooks written in English.
(5) Writing or typing quarter papers
(6) Taking class notes well

The results showed that students experienced their main problems in three language-related academic items at both times of the survey: autumn 1982 and spring 1983. They were 'Ability to write English', 'Giving oral reports in class' and 'Writing or typing quarter papers'. However, the number of problems identified, out of all the 26 'academic' questions, reduced from 13, at the time of first survey, to only 5 half a year later. The three language-related 'academic' problems remained among those five.

There are two important points that arise from these two studies. One is that international students' problems can be described differently depending on how the categories are set up. The same language-related problems can overlap in both academic and social problems. The analysis of data needs to be considered with this overlapping occurrence in mind. The other point is that the breakdown of respondents, according to their country of origin, also affects the analysis significantly. Amoh's study cannot cover this differentiation, which makes his final analysis less helpful.

Choi (1997) investigated the difficulties in English perceived by Korean students studying in Australian universities. Her research findings seem to be also relevant to an investigation of the study of Japanese students in UKHEIs. The politeness strategy they adopt, for example, when borrowing a book from a teacher, or when addressing a teacher or friend, seems to cause very similar problems for students in both countries.

Difficulties in English (Base: 47, p.265)

(i) Language use (e.g. ways of expressing politeness)	40% (N=19)
(ii) Australian accents	32% (N=15)
(iii) Australian / English idioms	55% (N=26)
(iv) English for academic purposes (e.g. essay writing)	43% (N=20)
(v) English grammar	23% (N=11)
(vi) Lack of vocabulary	32% (N=15)
(vii) English pronunciation (stress, accent, intonation, etc)	36% (N=17)
(viii) Other: lack of confidence in English, understanding of European or other Asian English, understanding of culture through language (e.g. comedies), concern about 'face-saving', personality problems, etc.)	19% (N=9)

English education in the home countries of Korea and Japan has similar problems caused by textbook oriented and grammar-focused teaching methods as well as by less pragmatically competent English teachers' 'bookish' lessons. Another source of difficulties is that both languages, Korean and Japanese, have very similar syntactic structures - sentences ending with verbs, objects being placed before verbs, and use of particles for syntactic functions. What Choi's research did not provide, can be achieved by further differentiation of the respondents' information by enlarging the scale of investigation.

Nipoda (2002), a UKCP registered psycho-therapist, who had extensive experience in counselling and psycho-therapy in both Japan and England, published an article (Unit 8, Chapter 5) on 'Japanese students' experiences of adaptation and acculturation in the United Kingdom.' She wrote: 'Having conducted case studies on Japanese students adaptation to British society, and having also offered counselling and psycho-therapy for Japanese students, I have found that many Japanese students suffer from burn-out and stress, and some of them even drop-out. Some university staff sometimes ask me why Japanese students adapt less well than students from other countries.'(p.1) She went on to give some insights into Japanese students' adaptation to the UK. She explained: 'Japanese people grow up in an environment where people around are all Japanese. Japan has developed an indigenous culture. At school Japanese students do not have any non-Japanese in the class. This kind of environment would make Japanese students' adaptation to other cultures fundamentally difficult.' (p.2)

Nipoda also carried out some research in 2000 to investigate the need for mental health services for the Japanese community in the UK. She found that the first difficulty Japanese students encounter is the language barrier with 59% of respondents answering that they had problems from this source. In Japan they do not learn conversational English and when they come to the UK they cannot communicate as they wish. This leads to sense of frustration and a lack of confidence within themselves. Many blame themselves because of the belief in Japanese culture; that it reflects one's internal self when one fails. She explained 'in Japan teachers just talk and students just listen, ..and play a passive role. ..Silence is valued in Japanese culture. .. and students are humble in expressing even their own achievements.'(p.3) She also wrote: 'Many Japanese students seem to feel that tutors do not show enough commitment....and that they do not give enough suggestions or feedback. They do not feel supported when they ask questions in their studies, and they feel that their teachers are not sensitive enough to overseas students' needs. ....From the tutors' point of view, Japanese students are too passive, and lack confidence. ..Academic staff think that Japanese students would not want their help. The Japanese would wait for an offer (of help) and the UK teachers would wait for the request.'(p.3-4) She pointed out that students are often under tremendous pressure not to fail, since if they do they would hurt family members. Also that in Japan students have to think about group needs first, whilst in the UK there is more freedom to fulfill individual needs. Nipoda believed that training in inter-cultural

skills would aid adaptation. However, she explained that there is almost no training offered in Japan for students before they come to Britain, whilst British universities offer little of this kind of training for cultural adaptation to Britain.

Although Nipoda's study deals with many aspects of Japanese students' problems, the core of their problems seems to be attributable to language problems.

5.2.2. Language problems - summary

It has been found that language problems range widely from matters of four basic core skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), to vocabulary, slang, accents, dialects, communication style differences including address terms, language learning issues, and issues of cultural values including politeness strategy. Since language is deep-rooted in human activity as a basis for socialization, students' perceptions of language problems as stress factors must be considered to be very significant. It also has to be borne in mind that language difficulties are closely related to the academic and cultural problems of international students. Categorical differentiation will therefore crucially influence the study result.

5.3. Academic problems – introduction

As with language problems, survey results of academic matters are also bound to vary according to their categorization. This means that using different sub-categorical questions brings about different results of data analysis even in the same field of enquiry under the general heading of 'academic'. This section will therefore examine two ways of approaching this study. One is to examine how severe the academic problems are when measured by previous studies, and the other is to consider what academic problems are actually identified by related studies. However, since these two questions are so intertwined, they cannot be treated completely apart.

In this section there is first an examination of some results of the factor analysis of academic problems experienced by international students. There then follows a breakdown of these academic problems. As with language problems, this review of academic problems from past literature has helped in formulating research questions for the main survey about Japanese students' stressful feelings in UKHEIs.

There is, of course, a close overlap of most research into problems caused chiefly by language difficulties and those which can be best described as 'academic problems'. It is therefore convenient to continue with consideration of research already mentioned in the previous section, and there is consequently no attempt to use a chronological order in this review of previous research into academic problems.

5.3.1. A review of research into academic problems

(1) In T.Yamamoto's (1986) study, two out of the six factors of adjustment difficulties, mentioned in the previous section, were clearly related to academic problems. They were students' perceptions of 'teaching and assessment' (F1) in the Table 5.4 below' and 'progress in their own study or research.' (F3) As Yamamoto's findings in Table 5.1 show, the issue of making satisfactory progress (F3) was found to cause slightly more problems, than that of teaching and assessment (F1), throughout the four periods of the survey. It was found that the reduction of the difficulties average score with time, over a nine month period, was the smallest in relation to academic problems and largest in relation to language and human relationships problems. The following table shows the rate of reduction of perceived problems in relation to the six areas of difficulty for students.

Table 5.4. The rate of reduction of stress problems. (Yamamoto, T.)

	F1 Teaching and evaluation	F2 Physical and mental health	F3 Progress in learning and research	F4 Different life style and customs	F5 Language	F6 Human relationships
Mean reduction rate (A) – (D)	0.14	0.27	0.27	0.39	0.83	0.8

Source: From Yamamoto, T. (1986) ((A) start of course, (D) nine months later) (Extrapolated from Yamamoto's Table 5.1of adjustment difficulties.)

(2) Yao and Matsubara (1990) found that there were seven main areas which could be a cause of academic problems.

(i) Decision about the way the study/research should be directed

(ii) Presentation at a seminar class

(iii) Preparation for the entrance examination

(iv) Retirement / withdrawal from the course

(v) Relationship with teachers/supervisors

(vi) Method of lecturing (e.g. to a large audience)

(vii) Inability to go to the next year grade

They found that the mean stress level of these 'academic problems' was 3.46 (SD = 0.85) in the case of overseas students studying in Japan (N=186), whereas that of Japanese home students (N=161) was slightly higher, reaching 3.67 (SD= 0.53). Out of six factors of life stressors that Yao and Matsubara identified as mentioned in 5.2.1 (p.40), four, including academic problems, had significantly ($p < 0.01$) higher scores for Japanese home students than for international students. In fact all six factors for students' life stressors were given higher scores by Japanese home students than by international students. The fact that Japanese students showed a higher level of mean stress in these surveys could well be a factor which could help in understanding Japanese students' problems in UKHEIs. However it is beyond the scope of the current survey to carry out an international comparison at this stage.

Yao and Matsubara's (1990) survey also contained some questions that could be regarded as problems related to academic experiences, although they were not classified as such. These were 'relationship with a tutor' and 'friction with other international students,' which were both assigned to a human relationships category. They also identified 'essay-writing' and 'feeling of distance from international (or Japanese) students, which were assigned to the category of 'everyday life problems.'

Both T.Yamamoto's and Yao and Matsubara's studies identified 'human relationships' as a very important and independent category for sources of difficulty for international students. Since the current research will aim to compare problems in the three areas, language, academic and socio-cultural, this means that questions about human relationships will be included in each area as a sub-category. Therefore questions about relationships with teachers, classmates and administrators will be asked under the

heading of 'academic problems', but will also be considered later along with other human relationship difficulties.

(3) Allen and Higgins (1994) found that academic problems were the most significant ones experienced by international students in the UK. However the academic problems related only to 'coping with the content of the course'. The 989 respondents to their survey were asked in an open question to indicate the main problem they had so far encountered. Academic problems ranked highest (34.5%, N=341), and one other related problem, 'adapting to different study methods' came fifth (7.4%, N=73). One cause of this difficulty was probably the fact that South East Asian students often have different styles of teaching and learning from those in the UK.

(4) In Amoh's (1984) study, academic problems of international students in the USA contained a wide range of 26 sub-categories. At the time of the first survey (Autumn 1982, N=64), 13 out of these 26 items were found to be more significant problems, with over 50% of positive responses. These are arranged in the order of highest percentage of students identifying the difficulty. However this total percentage was made up of students who either rated the problem as 'very serious', 'somewhat serious' or 'slightly severe'.

Table 5.5. The order of severity of academic problems (Amoh)

(Percentage of respondents who experienced each problem)

65%	Getting good grades was a problem.*
63%:	The frequency of college examinations.*
63%:	Ability to write in English. *
62%:	Registering for classes each quarter.
60%:	Taking class notes well.
58%:	Giving oral reports in class. *
57%:	Understanding how students and faculty relate to each other in the United States.
57%:	Learning differences between the U.S. and home education system.
55%:	Ability to understand English.
55%:	Subjective examinations (essays, etc).
53%:	Writing or typing coursework. *
50%:	Choosing subjects for a university course.
50%:	Understanding the role of the foreign student advisor.

Source: Amoh (1984) (*N.B.* The five items underlined were considered in the previous section as language problems. Items with * marks are the problems that were still severe in the second survey half a year later.)

This indicates that students had generally adapted well to a new academic system, but that skills related to performance and assessment were still a source of anxiety.

(5) Klineburg and Hull's (1979) study dealt with 2,536 foreign students studying in 11 different countries.

The list below summarises the sources of difficulty, out of the 24 items, that can be regarded as academically related problems for the students in the 11 countries. They found that international students in the UK (N=370) were the most likely of all to say that they were satisfied with their academic experience and were well above average in the general satisfaction with their general and social experience. They were the least likely to complain about dealing with university administration and were also highest in their appreciation of the helpfulness of their teachers. They came second in the intellectual stimulation they experienced during their course of study.

Table 5.6. Academically related problems and sources of difficulties (Kleinberg and Hull)

20% Lack of framework and direction in the academic programme
16%: Lack of motivation in my studies
8%: Lack of a private place to study
9%: Problems with examinations
10%: Difficulty of courses
16%: Lack of information regarding progress in studies
5%: Difficulties in dealing with the university administration
9%: Insufficient previous training
5%: Problems of proper placement level upon arrival

Source: Klineberg and Hull (1979)

It should be mentioned that in the 1970s, when the research was carried out, Britain still had a more generous policy towards international students and many of them came from America or British Commonwealth countries where English is used in most secondary schools. This is, of course, likely to influence results such as the levels of difficulty experienced by the students in academic work.

(6) Furnham and Alibhai (1985) studied the friendship network data of 140 international students from 35 different countries, using 25 host-national controls. They found a strong preference by students for co-national friends first, other nationals second, and host-nationals third. When students were asked who would be their preferred companion for a range of everyday situations, co-nationals came first, then host-

nationals and finally other nationals.

(7) Tomioka (2001) investigated Japanese students after they had been overseas for less than two months and found that those who had made friends with a wide range of people gained more satisfaction from their overseas study.

(8) Research by Zimmerman (1995) with 107 international university students in the USA also found that 'talking with American students' was the single most important factor in perceptions of communication competency and adjusting to American life. (p. 321)

(9) It is frequently argued in various studies that Asian students' learning style is notably different from that used in the UK and other Western countries. For example, Harris (1997) wrote:

'So far as Far Eastern students are concerned it is a truism that, raised in a conformist educational system, they are happier with memorizing and reproducing information than with problem-oriented and more active teaching strategies.' (p.42)

(10) Todd (1997) also pointed out that 'some lecturers characterize the learning strategies of overseas (Asian) students as relying on rote learning and memorization, and being unable to participate in class discussions or to think critically and analytically.' (p.176)

(11) An article by Elsey (1990) provided another very interesting view about overseas students from South-East Asia:

'Starting with their academic hopes and fears, not surprisingly, the acquisition of knowledge, academic development and success was high on their personal agendas, counterbalanced by the fears associated with failure, 'losing face' and experiencing communication problems in a foreign language and different academic system. It was clear that overseas students were very motivated to succeed and make the most of the opportunities, while being alive to the likely difficulties.' (p.52)

However the fact that South-East Asian students are often viewed as problematic, in a

western educational milieu, as rote-, surface-, passive-, and non-critical learners, cannot be ignored. On the contrary, this is indeed a serious problem for 'Confucian-heritage' students when added to the problems caused by the difficulty of their different learning styles.

(12) Nagata's (1999) article is based on her own personal experiences as an overseas student with a 'Non-English Speaking Background.'(NESB) After describing her main problems of essay writing and discussion in class, she summarised her story of hardship as follows:

'When I look back over the years of effort, pain, loneliness, and intermittent success I have had as an NESB student, I regret that there were relatively few of the (language) services that are available now. ....There are still supervisors who have reservations about this, because they think the work is not the student's own. As long as this perception persists NESB students will be handicapped and discriminated against on campus.....' (p.24)

Finally Todd's (1997) article provided a useful viewpoint in considering international students' essay writing in a critical way. She argued: 'Viewing overseas students as problematic can create problems and reduce the benefits of cross-cultural dialogue.' (p.181) After introducing different ways of argumentation in essays, she concluded:

'It is not that some cultures are critical and others not, but that cultures express criticism in different ways. We may not recognise, in students' writing, their use of their own genres, or their attempts to adopt ours, simply perceiving a lack of 'critical dimension'. It follows that it may not be enough to ask students to write in a critical way; they may need more detailed help about exactly how to discuss and how to be critical.' (p.181)

5.3.2. Academic problems - summary

Out of all the difficulties faced by international students overseas, academic problems are crucial for the majority, since the main purpose of their study is to gain academic qualifications or to improve academic standards. Another very significant point is the importance of language difficulties involved in academic problems. Other academic

problems that have so far been identified in this section are 'difficulties in teaching and assessment', 'making progress in study / research', 'human relationships especially with teachers', and 'difficulties caused by a different style of teaching and learning'. These sub-categories were used in the framing of the questionnaire for the research in this thesis.

5.4. Socio-cultural problems – introduction

Language and academic problems, faced by international students, usually seem to be relatively easier to identify than their socio-cultural problems. This is probably mainly because socio-cultural problems, as perceived by such students, tend to derive from extremely wide and complex human activities and experiences. This vastness and complexity of social contexts may make the scope of this investigation appear somewhat broader and therefore less easily defined. It was pointed out, in Chapter Three, that the relationships of the three areas, language, education and culture are dynamically overlapping and that they also influence one another. Nevertheless it can be reasonably accepted that socio-cultural problems of international students can refer to most problems other than those clearly identified as mainly belonging to language or academic areas. This view has been followed when formulating categories used in the research questionnaire.

This third area of investigation, the socio-cultural problems of overseas students, can be examined by the same process as that adopted in the two previous sections. Indeed the review of literature carried out so far has already revealed several socio-cultural problems. This is shown in the following list which has been made up by including all the factors, which have already been identified in the previous study analysis, which are not mainly language or academic in nature.

(a) Human relationships

(b) Financial difficulties

(c) Difficulties of a different environment – e.g. weather

(d) Cultural differences – e.g. food

(e) Accommodation problems

(f) Health problems

(g) Other more minor socio-cultural problems

5.4.1. A review of research into socio-cultural problems

(a) Human relationships.

Yamamoto, T.'s (1986) study showed that, for overseas Japanese students, 'human relationships' were the severest area of adjustment difficulty. This agrees with a conclusion reached by Allen and Higgins (1994):

'At the time of the survey Japanese students were experiencing the greatest difficulties in mixing with home (UK) students, (49% compared with 29% of the total sample). 17% of Japanese students said mixing with home (UK) students was the most significant problem which they had faced so far compared with 9 % of the overall sample.' (P.106-7)

Yao and Matsubara's (1990) findings were even more decisive. According to them, problems caused by human relationships and some other related areas were found to be significantly higher ($p<.01$) for Japanese home students (Mean=3.53, SD=.54) than for international students in Japan. (Mean=2.84, SD=.76) Yao and Matsubara (ibid) identified 11 items that belong to the human relationship area, which included questions about problems experienced by students themselves, about relationships with their parents, or friends of either sex, or other ethnicities.

The data drawn from these three studies leads naturally to consideration about whether the conclusions have something to do with the Japanese nationality traits and the relatively tight human relationships influenced by Confucianism, with its emphasis on conformity and a high level of respect for the elderly and those in authority. In addition, it might be argued that because Japanese are islanders with relatively fewer chances of contacting 'foreign' people, this may make them very tense when they first experience overseas life.

Amoh's (1984) study of international students in the USA found rather less severe problems of human relationships than the three studies mentioned above. In the 'social' category of his research, the seven items listed below can all be linked to human relationship problems. (*N.B.* The figures in the brackets show the percentages of respondents experiencing some problems at the two times of survey which were six

months apart.)

Q.31 Being lonely (55%, 37%)

Q.32 Learning how to make friends (58%, 24%)

Q.35. Dating practices in the U.S. (40%, 16%)

Q.36. Finding a social group in which I can be accepted (40%, 18%)

Q.38. Dealing with multiple roles: student, tourist, and 'ambassador' for my country (30%, 21%)

Q.39. Negative or incorrect attitudes of some American students toward 'foreign students.' (46%, 38%)

Q. 49. Opportunities to meet more U.S. people. (46%, 36%)

The data shows that, except for two cases at the time of first survey which were questions of loneliness (Q31), and learning how to make friends (Q.32), all other items of human relationships were identified as problems by less than half of the respondents. Nevertheless no doubt they were severe problems for some of them. In every case there was a considerable improvement after an interval of six months.

Amoh's (1984) questionnaire also investigated human relationships problems which he included in a 'personal' category. Once again there were seven items linked with problems from human relationships.

Q.51. Establishing good relationships with my course instructors. (36%, 30%)

Q.52. Establishing a good relationship with a foreign student advisor. (30%, 11%)

Q.57. Getting along with my U.S. room-mate. (16%, 8%)

Q.58. Being able to find 'dates.' (20%, 17%)

Q.65. Finding a U.S. student as a room-mate. (17%, 0%)

Q.69. Finding invitations to visit in U.S. homes. (41%, 28%)

Q.76. Getting to know U.S. neighbours. (48%, 32%)

Human relationships problems included those with tutors, advisors, classmates, co-national friends, neighbours, friends of either sex, any nationality or ethnicity, host family members, shop asistants and even office staff in places such as a post office, council office, or police station. In addition to this breakdown, as Yao and Matsubara (1990) showed, problems of loneliness, homesickness and worries about themselves or

their own parents, friends or families can also be included in this category.

Since human relationships cover so many categories, they are clearly of crucial importance in the social life of every student. Indeed there are many studies related to human relationships, in the area of cross-cultural psychology, covering friendship patterns of students from overseas countries. One of these found that 'talking with host (American) students' was the single most important factor in perceptions of communication competency and adjusting to American life.' (Zimmermann, 1995. p.321) This broader question of students' coping strategies when experiencing stress is clearly as important a topic for research in socio-cultural as in language and academic problems.

(b) Financial difficulties.

Amoh (1984) dealt with financial problems of international students in the USA as 'personal' areas and his questions and results are shown below: (The two figures in the brackets show the percentages of students with problems over a six month interval.)

Rising cost of living in the U.S. (77%, 61%)
Finding enough money to meet expenses (66%, 63%)
Receiving enough money from home (50%, 35%)

The first two of these financial concerns remained as a serious problem throughout the two periods of his survey. The third was a problem for just over a third of the students at the second survey half a year later. In the category termed 'personal' only four out of a total of 28 items remained as 'a serious problem' throughout the survey. The other two were about 'feeling under tension' (71%, 59%) and 'coping with weather in the U.S.A.'. (71%, 57%)

Research into the financial problems of overseas students in the UK, by Allen and Higgins (1994), found slight differences in the data between respondents of different year groups, and also when they used different types of question about the same problem. When they asked students which, of a list of options, they had thought would be a problem for them before going overseas; the highest percentage (37% of 1084 respondents) chose financial problems. However, only 11% said that these financial

problems were the most severe whilst in the UK. The respondents' dismay, about the fee differentiation adopted between UK home and international students, was recorded.

One of Hull's (1978) respondents left an important message for other international students; 'Prepare a lot of vitamin 'M'! 'M' means, of course, 'Money'!' (p.184) This illustrates the fact that financial problems are commonplace. They can even occur in a language related context if, for example, students are requested to pay for proof-reading of their essay or for extra language lessons. Financial problems can also be examined by an in-depth investigation into the economic background of the two countries involved. The obvious fact that international students cannot study abroad unless they have sufficient finance, whether by scholarship, from their parents or their own savings, has a definite influence on their general feelings and attitudes. Habu (2000), as was mentioned in Chapter 2, pointed out that the increase of Japanese students in the UK came with the devaluation of G.B.Sterling and the strengthening of the Japanese Yen.

(c) Difficulties of different environments – e.g. weather.

In T. Yamamoto's (1986) study, the question about weather being a cause of adjustment difficulty is included in the factor group termed 'customs and habits – different life styles' and was fourth highest out of 6 factors at all four times of the survey with the mean being between 2.61 and 2.22. In Yao and Matsubara's (1990) results, the question about the weather in Japan was part of a factor group named 'problems caused by different environments'. Both international students in Japan and Japanese home students scored 'coping with the weather' as a very low stressor. The order of difficulty was 41st for international students (Mean=2.52) and 42nd for Japanese home students (Mean=2.73 out of 45 items), and there was no significant difference between the two groups.

In contrast to this, Allen and Higgins' (1994) found that international students in the UK identified the weather issue to be the cause of a relatively high concern. The following table, made by the writer to study only the item of weather, shows the order of difficulty out of the 12 problems respondents were given to consider.

Table 5.7. Concerns of international students about the weather (Allen and Higgins)

Potential, initial and current concerns.

Issue	Potential Concern (N=1084)		Initial Concern (N=1094)		Current Concern (N=932)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
The weather	454	42	443	41	324	35
Order in the list	3rd / 12		2nd / 12		1st / 12	

Source: Allen and Higgins (1994. p.64, Table 47)

However when respondents were asked in an open question to indicate the main problem they had so far encountered, the issue of the weather came sixth among nine problems, with only 53 respondents out of a total of 989 (5.4%) choosing this as the main problem. This shows that, even in the same investigation, different wording (e.g. concern / problem) and also different times of survey can bring about different results.

Amoh's (1984) study of 'personal difficulties' found that 'changes of weather condition in the USA' was a problem for 71 % of international students in the autumn of 1982 and 57 % in the spring of 1983. In fact 'changes of weather' was the severest problem of all 28 'personal difficulties' for female respondents at both times of his survey (75%, 74%), while for male respondents it was 2nd and 4th.(71%, 53%)

In considering these results it must be remembered that some students, for example those from Africa, would experience weather differences much more than most!

(d) Cultural differences – e.g. food.

Yao and Matsubara (1990) found that a difference in dietary habits and food caused similar levels of minor stressful feelings to both international students in Japan and Japanese home students. The mean is 2.48 for international students (42nd / 45 items), and 2.70 for Japanese home students. (43rd /45)

The following table is the data from Allen and Higgins' (1994) study, arranged by the writer. It should be noted that, although the percentage of students' current concern decreased, the order of severity of concern actually increased slightly.

Table 5.8. Concerns of international students about food (Allen and Higgins)

Potential, initial and current concerns

Issue	Potential Concern (N=1084)		Initial Concern (N=1094)		Current Concern (N=932)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Unsuitable food	328	30	354	32	159	17
Order in the list	10 / 12		8 / 12		7 / 12	

Source: Allen and Higgins (1994, p.64)

In Amoh's (1984) study, the question about food was in the 'personal' category and the percentage of students who reported difficulty in finding food they liked in the US was 57% initially and 47 % after another six months. At the time of two surveys, 63% and 44% of male respondents reported that finding their favourite food in the U.S.A. was a problem compared with only 38% and 28% of females.

(e) Accommodation problems.

'*Homes Far From Home*' a book published by the Overseas Students Trust (Hughes 1990) presented international students' needs and expectations under eight headings. These are 'availability', 'climate', 'diet', 'culture (which includes religion, language, and leisure behaviour)', 'ablutions', 'social customs and law' (e.g. public transport systems, using telephones, having a T.V. licence), 'costs' and 'family' (e.g. spouse, children or partner). One of their conclusions was that 'The housing of international students is vital for the success of their stay in this country.' (p.30)

According to this survey, the principal problems encountered by interviewees (N=500) in their accommodation were 'noise from neighbours', 'safety on the streets at night', 'problems with damp or vermin' and 'problems in shared accommodation'. Here are some extracts from the Hughes' survey conclusion. (p.59-60)

(1) Compared with the private sector, a larger percentage of international students, living in institutional accommodation, find noisy neighbours a problem and feels unsafe at night.
(2) Problems with damp and vermin only affect a minority of overseas students.
(3) Where it is not already done, steps should be taken to improve the cleaning of

common areas in institutional accommodation.

(4) Price, privacy, safety and warmth are the most strongly favoured features in accommodation. More than two-thirds prefer showers to baths.

T. Yamamoto's (1986) study of Japanese students overseas included just one issue 'a different style of lavatory and bath' which belonged to a factor of different life styles. In Yao and Matsubara's (1990) study, there are three problem areas connected with accommodation. The mean stress level and position of the problem out of 45 items are given below in brackets. The first set of figure is for international and the second for Japanese students.

Inconvenience of bath or shower.	(3.22, No. 25 / 3.19, No.31)
Dissatisfaction about accommodation.	(3.21, No. 26 / 3.11, No. 34)
Shortage of contact with local people.	(2.81, No. 35 / 2.39, No. 45)

The high level of dissatisfaction of international students in Japan, in not having sufficient contact with local people, suggests that these students do wish to have more frequent contact, but are often not able to achieve this because of living in relatively isolated halls of residence or other accommodation provided by institutions.

Allen and Higgins (1994) also provided interesting data, tabulated below, about students' accommodation problems. This showed accommodation was the most severely felt potential concern for applicants from overseas although this decreased the longer they stayed in the host country.

Table 5.9. Concerns of international students about finding suitable accommodation (Allen and Higgins) - Potential, initial and current concerns

Issue	Potential Concern (N=1084)		Initial Concern (N=1094)		Current Concern (N=932)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Finding suitable accommodation	484	45	290	27	133	14
Order in the list	1 / 12		10 / 12		9 / 12	

Source: Allen and Higgins (1994, p.64)

However it must be remembered that accommodation problems cannot be considered completely separately from problems of finance, weather, food, human relationships or even language and academic problems.

(f) Health problems.

The issue of health problems can be related to factors, both psychological and physical, such as illness, injury, feelings of homesickness, culture shock, ideas of nutrition, cleanliness, safety, sanitation, dealing with medicines, doctors, hospitals and the cost of treatment. When psychological studies are analysed, there is much evidence about mal-adjustments, or even nervous breakdowns, anxieties and distresses caused by cross-cultural factors.

Furukawa and Shibayama (1993) investigated 123 Japanese adolescents studying overseas, in home stay accommodation for 1 year, in order to find out what factors best predicted any likely maladjustment of these students in foreign cultures. They concluded that three factors emerged as strong predictors of maladjustment: neuroticism, unsatisfactory maternal care before the age of 16 and lack of friendship at home. These all involve pre-disposition, which lies outside the present research.

T. Yamamoto's (1986) survey analysis sought to identify a group of mental and physical health problems by using a questionnaire which contained the question items shown below:

(1) I tend to be irritated.
(2) I am nervous.
(3) I tend to be emotionally upset.
(4) I am not in good health.
(5) I have poor digestion.
(6) I often feel homesick.
(7) I often feel very tired.
(8) I sometimes feel anxious.
(9) I am losing my sense of humour.

Although the mean values of the six factors of T. Yamamoto's study (1986) showed that the health factor was the second lowest, the rate of reduction of health difficulties was the second smallest. This means that health problems were less likely to be influenced by the duration of stay. In some cases, of course, it will involve students with long term health conditions.

Table 5.10. Adjustment difficulties of 96 Japanese students studying overseas (Yamamoto, T)
(A= start of the course, B= 3 months later, C=6 months later, D=9 months later)

	Factor 1 Teaching & evaluation	Factor 2 Physical and mental health	Factor 3 Progress in learning and research	Factor 4 Different life style and customs	Factor 5 Language	Factor 6 Human relation-ships
Mean of 4 times (A, B,C,D)	2.19	2.20	2.80	2.35	2.89	2.93
Mean difference (A - D)	0.14	0.27	0.27	0.39	0.83	0.8

Source: Yamamoto, T. (1986. p.587).

Allen and Higgins' (1994) data on international students in the UK contained two items that are related to minor psychological or adjustment problems. They were 'feeling homesick' and 'feeling lonely / isolated'. These are shown in the table below, together with the data of two more items (problems of mixing with UK home students and of adapting to British culture/customs). It should be noted that these four areas have common patterns where the initial concern was slightly higher than the potential concern before going overseas. However, in the later survey, the current problem was much less severe.

Table 5.11. Concerns related to human relationships (Allen and Higgins)

Issue	Potential Concern (N=1084)		Initial Concern (N=1094)		Current Concern (N=932)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No	%
Feeling homesick	372	34.3	411	37.6	183	19.6
Feeling lonely / isolated	343	31.6	381	34.8	139	14.9
Mixing with home (UK) students	406	37.5	460	42.0	271	29.1
Adapting to UK culture / customs	280	25.8	328	30.0	92	9.9

Source: Allen and Higgins (1994. p.64. Extracted from Table 47.)

The response to Amoh's (1984) three health related questions also showed less stress as time progressed.

Finding enough time to rest (66%, 48%)
Worrying about my mental health (29%, 20%)
Feeling under tension (71%, 59%)

Study of health issues may well provide a barometer of successful adjustment in a host country. These issues, although not usually the greatest cause of stress, are nevertheless extremely important. They may be critical for a few students.

(g) Other problems

The list of socio-cultural problems can be extended almost indefinitely. Examples of relatively minor problems that have been found by various studies are listed below.

T. Yamamoto.'s (1986) study of Japanese students overseas provided these examples:
(1) I am baffled at the different ways in which people from this country spend their free time.
(2) I am troubled at not knowing how to greet someone or show courtesy at this university.
(3) I am embarrassed by the attitude of people of this country toward Japanese people.

Four examples of family issues came from Amoh's study showing problems found on arrival, and after six months' stay, in the USA. Their relatively minor stress may partly reflect the fact that the majority of students arrived in America without a spouse or dependants.

(1) Finding social activities for my children (15%, 8%)
(2) Finding appropriate child care. (11%, 10%)
(3) Finding appropriate educational opportunities for children. (10%, 5%)
(4) Finding English language training for my spouse at a reasonable cost. (22%, 20%)

There is always a possibility that if a questionnaire is formulated by predetermined categories of questions, it may not capture certain realities that exist in the research field.

Thus, when trying to identify major problems of Japanese students in UKHEIs, minor but sometimes significant problems can remain hidden within the targeted area. A holistic awareness of the research target is therefore very important, as well as a careful methodological approach. This is the most important reason why this research used mixed methods, including both a quantitative and a qualitative approach.

5.4.2. Socio-cultural problems – summary

A review of a number of previous studies has shown that some of the major socio-cultural problems are those related to 'human relationships', 'finance', 'weather', 'food', 'accommodation' and 'health'. There is, of course, always scope for a new study of a further breakdown of these problems, which often interact and overlap with each other and other related problems. Once again it can be seen that formulation of categories can considerably affect data analysis. This was a major consideration when the questionnaire was designed.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter has partly addressed the second and fourth of the seven subsidiary research questions, which were identified in Chapter 1.4, about the main problems of Japanese students and what one can learn from earlier related research. Chapter 3 provided a rationale for the research focus on three areas of experience which were Language, Education and Culture. Although there is a considerable overlap, in actual situations in life, of the three areas, they still provide a good basis for both devising a questionnaire and then understanding the findings showing the perceived stress of students together with their coping strategies.

Previous studies have shown that language and academic problems were the most significant, followed by problems involving human relationships and other socio-cultural factors.

A wide range of language problems, ranging from the activities of reading, writing, listening, and speaking to wider communication problems were identified by earlier researchers, whilst academic problems were seen as absolutely crucial for students to find a solution in meeting their main aim at UKHEIs. Nevertheless, researchers have

found that difficulties arising from human relationships have often been severe and connected to other related problems, whilst other socio-cultural problems have sometimes caused most stress to a few students. A careful study of this earlier research was very useful in helping to formulate a series of questions incorporated into the questionnaire used in this research.

The next chapter deals with methods used in this research including a description and justification of the research design, which was chosen after relevant evidence and objectives had been considered. It considers both quantitative and qualitative approaches and the use of interviews both as a follow-up to better understand the answers to the questionnaire, as well as to allow more detailed qualitative perceptions of students to be recorded.

Chapter Six. An Overview of the Research Design and Strategy

6.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research design and strategy, including a description of the research methods used. The overview addresses finding an answer to the third of the seven subsidiary research question, identified in Chapter 1.4, which was 'what methods and questions should be used in the research?' It includes consideration of why it was decided to adopt a multiple approach to data collection using a preliminary survey by interview or e-mail, then a more detailed survey using a questionnaire, followed by interviews and e-mail communication with some selected students. A detailed account of the preliminary survey can be found in Chapter 7, of the main survey in Chapters 8, 9 and 10, and of the follow-up interviews in Chapter 11. Each of these chapters includes some more details of data collection methods and strategies as well as their results and subsequent analysis.

Following this brief introduction the next section (6.2.) will examine the case for using multiple methods of data collection and the arguments against merely using a single method. This includes consideration of the views of other researchers about the use of multiple methods of data collection. This is then followed by a more detailed examination of these methods of data collection. First of all, in 6.3.1, the preliminary survey is described with its 'snow-balling' method of opportunistic sampling. It will be seen that this strengthened the argument for using three areas of potential difficulties, namely those of language use, academic study and socio-cultural activity. Section 6.3.2 explains how the main questionnaire was designed, and in section 6.3.3 the procedures of data collection are described and a figure 6.1 is presented to show the way the questionnaire investigated a variety of factors relating to individual students before, during and after their studies in UKHEIs. This section also includes an explanation of the problems in contacting students caused by the Data Protection Act and how these were overcome. Section 6.3.4. then describes the in-depth interviews and e-mail communications used as a follow-up to the questionnaire. The use of stress-time graphs is explained as an important further method in which the relative effects of stress, over a period of study time, could be discovered. Section 6.3.5 deals with the analysis and

comparison of results, and the chapter ends with further thoughts about the importance, limitations and validity of the research (6.3.6). This is accompanied by figure 6.2 which shows a chronological structural model of both the seven subsidiary research questions and the research methods used. There is also an explanation of why a number of areas, in which useful information might have been gathered, have been left out owing to the limitations of space in this research.

6.2. Single or multiple methods of research

The review of the related research literature was very useful in identifying stressful situations and coping strategies, as well as helping to define related terminology and identify broad categories of stressful events of international students. Evidence included both single and multiple methods of research. In the present research, a single method of data collection would have been more straightforward and would have needed less time for both the survey and analysis. This would have simply identified a student's perception of the degree of stress experienced in a variety of clearly defined areas of experience. It would also have enabled the discovery of the strategies adopted by the students to try to cope with a series of difficult experiences. Then, by comparison with the results from other students, it would have revealed how a series of difficult life factors can affect students with different degrees of severity. However it must be remembered that we are not merely dealing with statistics which are necessarily limited by the exact nature of the questions asked to students. On the contrary, it is individual human beings that are under investigation and only by allowing individual students to describe their experience of stress over the entire period of their overseas study can we gain a more accurate and a fuller understanding of their experience. It is clearly helpful to be able to ask students why, when and how they have experienced stress, and how they have tried to cope with this, and with what degree of success.

Another advantage of using multiple methods is the possibility of comparison of findings of similar or identical stress factors. Denscombe (1998) pointed out:

'Valuable though this is, the production of more and different kinds of data on a given topic is not necessarily the prime benefit of using more than one method. From the researcher's point of view an equal benefit springs from the way alternative methods allow the findings from one method to be checked against findings from another. The

multi-method approach allows findings to be corroborated or questioned by comparing the data produced by different methods. ... Seeing things from a different perspective and the opportunity to corroborate findings can enhance the validity of data. They do not prove that the researcher has 'got it right', but they do give some confidence that the meaning of the data has some consistency across methods and that the findings are not closely tied up with a particular method used to collect the data.' (P.84-85)

In a later chapter Denscombe (1998) explained the concept of validity:

'In a broad sense, validity means that the data and the methods are 'right'. In terms of research data, the notion of validity hinges around whether or not the data reflect the truth, reflect reality and cover the crucial matters. In terms of the methods used to obtain data, validity addresses the question, 'are we measuring suitable indicators of the concept and are we getting accurate results?' The idea of validity hinges around the extent to which research data and the methods for obtaining the data are deemed accurate, honest and on target.' (P.241)

Although much research into the problems of international students has been carried out using only questionnaires, there are many researchers who have strongly supported the use of multiple methods of data collection. A selection of their conclusions is summarized below.

According to Cohen and Manion (1994), 'Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour.....By analogy, triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and, in so doing, making use of both quantitative and qualitative data.' (P.233)

Robson (1993) also argued that an advantage of multiple methods, which permit triangulation, is that these different methods can obtain different data that cannot be obtained by a single method. He pointed out:

'Multiple methods can also be used in complementary fashion to enhance interpretability. For example, in a primarily quantitative study, the interpretation of

statistical analyses may be enhanced by a qualitative narrative account. Conversely, a qualitative account may be the major outcome of a study but it can be enhanced by supportive quantitative evidence used to buttress and perhaps clarify the account.' (p.289-291)

In her study on international students' behaviour Walker (1997) also criticised a single method research:

'Methodology is driven by the nature of the subject: in this case it has to be a triangulated multi-method process; a single methodology or anything less than an eclectic approach does violence to this robust cluster of inter-related issues. ...Potential problems of bias, distortion, lack of representativeness and generalisability can be addressed by triangulation.' (p.195)

The only investigator in this study was the researcher herself, who endeavoured to find answers to the research questions. In doing this, both quantitative and qualitative strategies were used in order to evaluate more clearly and fully the perceptions of stress experienced by students in the sample.

The aim of the research is to understand both (a) the statistical features of the target phenomenon that can be measured and analysed through a quantitative survey and (b) the causes and consequences of stress factors and coping strategies as subjectively perceived by Japanese students. The quantitative method gives breadth and generality to the data, whilst a qualitative approach produces more in-depth and realistic findings. These two types of data should not be regarded as opposing or separate but instead they can be seen as complementing and qualifying each other, since they can depict different aspects of the same phenomenon.

In this research multiple approaches were adopted by conducting both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. These included a survey based on response to the questionnaire and direct contact with respondents, either by interviews or by e-mail communication. A preliminary qualitative study into documentary data including essays, fictions and electronic homepages written by Japanese students, engaged in cross-cultural learning situations, provided the researcher with additional insight into the target phenomenon. To quote Walker (1997) again: 'it should not be supposed that the

boundaries between the strategies are clear and sharp. There are large areas of overlap despite the distinct features of each method.'(p.195) Seeking to fulfil research objectives naturally requires data collection to be as systematic and thorough-going as possible. This method can be called a "holographic study", using a term first proposed by John Ross (1982), an American linguist.

In a UKCISA on-line publication Pelletier (2003), after reviewing 46 studies of unpublished research relating to the experiences of international students in UKHEIs, wrote:

'Though the research discussed in this report varies considerably in scope, there is a striking similarity in the methodology adopted in many of the studies. Typically, there is a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches: structured questionnaires (postal or through face-to-face interview), sent to a sample of (or all) the target population, are employed to gather quantitative data, and semi-structured individual and/or group interviews are conducted to provide further data and a richer picture of student experiences.' (Online Project report, Section 4, p.11)

This comment gives further support to this research. The use of two approaches (quantitative and qualitative) is recommended in studying human behaviour, including international students' experiences, because a one-sided approach does not reveal the complexity and reality of the comprehensive phenomenon in its totality.

6.3. An outline of the research undertaken

What follows is an overview of the research undertaken whilst details about issues arising will be dealt with in the appropriate following chapters.

6.3.1. The preliminary survey – interviews and e-mail communications

In order to assist with the design of the main questionnaire, a preliminary study was conducted with 35 Japanese students who had finished their courses in UKHEIs. This was achieved by an interview, e-mail or interface contact, asking 12 questions, which are shown in the following chapter. (Table 7.1) The sampling method adopted was a snow-balling or opportunistic approach, as it was considered best to utilize the

researcher's own contacts which arose from being a former post-graduate student at London University and also a teacher of English in a Japanese university. The entire translation was made by the researcher, since all interviews and e-mail contacts were made in Japanese. The whole preliminary survey procedure was carried out between February and November 2000.

About 50 people were approached, mostly in Japan together with a few in England. Some responded to the questions by e-mails, some by both telephone and email, and others in direct interviews. This method of sampling seemed appropriate because of the nature of the questions which were not designed mainly for quantitative analysis but rather to give a wider picture of stress awareness and thus help in designing the questionnaire to be used in the main survey. It was relatively easy to contact nearly fifty Japanese people directly or indirectly through introductions, apparently reflecting the growing population of Japanese students in the UK. People introduced friends and friends' friends very readily and most of them were very cooperative and willing to participate in the survey. This might be partly explained by a desire for these Japanese students to express and share their experiences of studying in UK with other co-nationals.

Many facets of student experiences were included in the questions of the preliminary study, such as motivation, success factors, advice to other students and UK institutions, and three main areas of aggravated difficulties (language, academic, and socio-cultural) were readily identified from their experiences. Respondents were asked to provide answers about their stressful feelings in each of these three areas. Consideration of their replies reassured the researcher to proceed with the investigation using this threefold categorization. It also led the researcher to the view that, to gain a more complete and valid picture of the stressful experiences of students, it would be worthwhile to arrange face-to-face interviews with a sample of students. Although language problems could be foreseen as likely to be the most severe problems experienced, and many respondents did actually express this, the overall experience of an average Japanese student in higher education in the UK was much more complex. Further steps clearly needed to be made to undertake a larger scope for the investigation, with a wider population of Japanese students in the UK, so that a broader and more comprehensive picture could be obtained.

A fuller account of this preliminary survey is provided in Chapter 7, including lists of

all participants, with coded names, and all the questions used in the preliminary study.

6.3.2. The main questionnaire

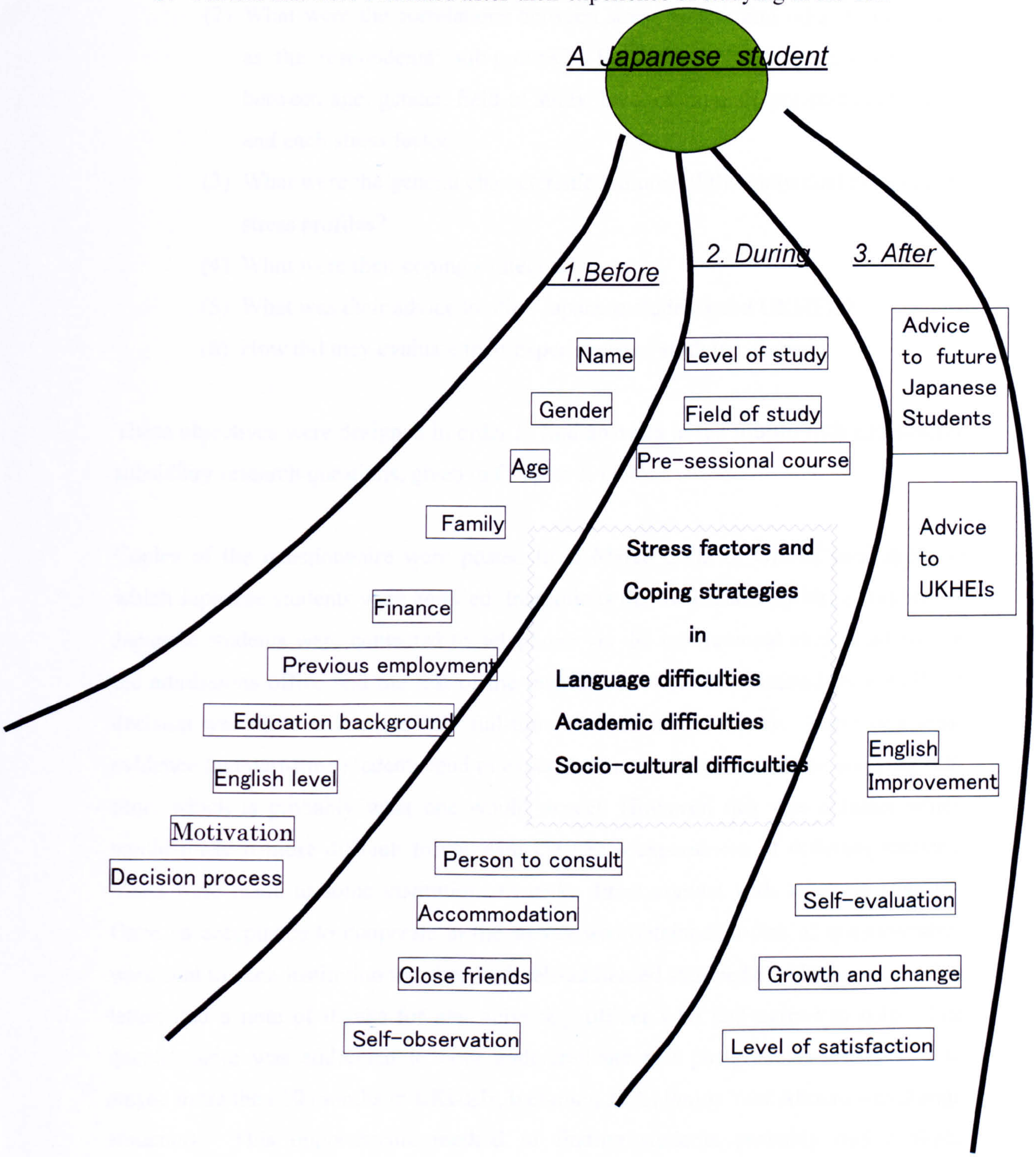
After the preliminary study the main questionnaire was initially designed by the researcher drawing on both the outcomes of the preliminary survey and on the various studies previously carried out, which have been discussed in the chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 reviewing related literature. The fresh insights, obtained through the preliminary study, proved to be particularly helpful in formulating specific questions. Every item of the questions was very carefully selected and then arranged and compiled into the main questionnaire both in Japanese and the English language. A five point Likert scale was used to determine the students' perception of the degree or level of stress experienced in any potentially stressful situation. This was devised to give each student plenty of scope in deciding an accurate estimate of their stress. Throughout the process of its formulation the questionnaire was tested and scrutinized repeatedly by the total of 12 people who had agreed to help. They were either supervisors, statisticians, preliminary questionnaire respondents, or other educational practitioners and researchers. The main aim of the questionnaire was to reveal / identify what are the levels of severity of the stress factors of Japanese students in UKHEIs. The whole design of the questionnaire is shown in a Figure 6.1 below and a complete copy of the questionnaire is shown in Appendix II.

Pelletier (2003) writes that: 'Any categorization is necessarily subjective' (Project report, Section 4, p.10), but the decision to view students' experiences from the three categories of language, education and socio-cultural content needed to be validated by the preliminary study. In this study the questions regarding stress factors were addressed in two separate sets of questions, one of which contained 17 items in each of the three areas. The last item (No.17) in each area was left free for open answers. Thus a total of 48 (=16X3) items depicting various stressful events were investigated and analysed, and a correlation with other information in the questionnaire was also examined and described using a statistical computer package (SPSS) and an Excel programme.

Figure 6.1. Questions about individual student's factors in the survey questionnaire (Before, During and After studying in the UKHEIs)

The questionnaire was designed to investigate:

1. Factors which were determined **before** students came to the UK.
2. Factors that occurred **during** their stay in the UK.
3. Factors that were evaluated **after** their experience of studying in the UK.



The main objectives of the analysis were to identify the following:

(1) Which experiences were perceived to be most stressful in the three areas; language, academic and socio-cultural?
(2) What were the correlations between stress factors and other features such as the respondents' sub-groups? Emphasis being put on comparisons between age, gender, field of study, level of English, pre-sessional course, and each stress factor.
(3) What were the general characteristic features of the individual respondent's stress profiles?
(4) What were their coping strategies?
(5) What was their advice to other Japanese students and UKHEIs?
(6) How did they evaluate their experiences of studying abroad?

These objectives were designed in order to find answers to the fourth, fifth and seventh subsidiary research questions, given in Chapter 1. (1.4)

Copies of the questionnaire were posted from March 2002 to UKHE institutions in which Japanese students were enrolled. Institutions that had relatively large numbers of Japanese students were contacted by telephone via the international student advisor or the admissions office and the rest of the institutions were all contacted by e-mail. A decision was made to include only full-time students in the survey. There was some evidence that part-time students tend to experience more stress than those studying full-time, which is probably what one would expect. However, this was a factor which would make it more difficult to compare the stress experiences of different students. Visits were made to some institutions to make direct contact with Japanese students. Once an acceptance to cooperate in the survey was obtained, copies of questionnaires were sent to each institution together with self-addressed stamped envelopes, a covering letter, and a note of thanks for any university officer who had agreed to help. The questionnaire was addressed to both undergraduate and postgraduate students, who stayed more than 10 months in UKHEIs, including JYA (Junior Year Abroad – exchange students). This opportunistic method of finding students probably had a slight disadvantage based on the fact that certain types of students were more likely to fill in and return their questionnaires.

Completed questionnaires were returned from 139 institutions, and these were all subjected to analysis. Over 1000 questionnaires were printed in Japanese and most of them were sent out by post although it was clear that many were never given to students since a large number were returned unused, and in a few cases the institution did not find many students willing to collaborate in the research. Therefore it is not known how many possible respondents had actually received the questionnaire and not returned it. The number of returned questionnaires was 300, of which the answers from 15 were excluded since respondents did not fulfill requirements for various reasons such as age (too young), period of study (less than 10 months), or location (Japanese students in USA). Finally 285 responses were found to be qualified for analysis. The details of gender and subject specialization were compared with HESA's (2000) statistics and found to be reasonably similar in proportion. To achieve an exact match would have involved discarding some of the volunteers and this degree of sample perfection did not seem to be necessary in this research. There is however a probability, with such a large number of participants, of achieving a reasonable similarity with the experiences of the total number of Japanese students in the UK.

The overall data summary and descriptive analysis were all arranged in tables and are attached in Appendix III.

6.3.3. The procedures of data collection and the research methods used

In the main survey, the 13-page questionnaire was arranged along chronological lines relating to experiences prior to, during, and after the study in UKHEIs. (Figure 6.1) As was explained, in the previous section, it is not possible to calculate an accurate response rate because no information was received from institutions about the number of questionnaires they gave to students, for reasons discussed above.

The questionnaire (Appendix II) had two parts, five sections, and a total of 150 question items, and was prepared in both Japanese and English. The researcher's website, *Japan / UK study* (http://www.geocities.jp/hayamichi47/) includes the original Japanese version. This questionnaire was distributed in various ways throughout UK higher education institutions, or through some local Japanese society organizers in the UK, or else sent to a number of individual participants, who were directly contacted by the researcher, in either the UK or Japan. However, there was a problem of contacting

students directly. This was because the institutions could not allow the researcher to contact possible subjects directly due to the Data Protection Act. This prevented the survey from achieving a higher response rate. The researcher is extremely grateful to a number of gatekeepers who helped to distribute and collect this questionnaire from respondents in their institutions. As a result, this total of 285 valid questionnaires was received, which can be regarded as a successful figure for this single researcher's self-funded project.

Returned questionnaires were immediately numbered in the order of receipt. The earliest response entry was made in February 2002 and the last reply was received in March 2003.

The confidentiality of individual students participating in the research was an important requirement and students were assured that their names and places of study would not be used in any publication of research results. This was not only to protect students' privacy, but also to avoid any harm that could arise from any answers which involved other parties to their experiences. It was decided to use pseudonyms and code numbers throughout the research.

258 of the 285 respondents gave their e-mail addresses to the researcher and it was very encouraging to see their keen interest in the research. Some of the respondents were contacted afterwards to fill in missing information or to clarify the meaning of some answers.

However, no research method can be utterly faultless in every respect. The questionnaire created for this research may be judged, with hindsight, as slightly over-loaded. This was because the intention was directed towards gaining insight into the presence or absence of stress factors and coping strategies. The questionnaire possibly involved seeking too much detailed and broad information about the students' lives. Some of this data was not always of direct value when considering stress factors and coping strategies of the respondents. Also some of their answers were in too much detail to be used for overall analysis. Whether the bulkiness of the questionnaire affected the response rate is not known, but it must be mentioned that the researcher received several comments from respondents about the questionnaire being well-arranged and respondent friendly in its format.

The responses to the questionnaire provided the great majority of the quantitative information needed for the research as well as some qualitative responses in answers to open-ended questions. The findings of this survey are given in Chapters 8, 9, and 10 together with analysis and discussion. The next section outlines how a follow-up procedure enabled qualitative information to be gained which helped greatly in both clarifying earlier responses as well as providing much new and interesting qualitative data.

6.3.4. The qualitative phase of research: the follow-up interview and email.

In-depth interviews and e-mail communications were conducted in 2005. The main aim was to facilitate a deeper understanding of student experiences. The sampling method used consisted of two stages. First, all respondents to the main questionnaire, who wrote their email addresses, were contacted by email with an enquiry about the possibilities of a follow-up interview, telephone interview, or e-mail exchange. Selection of those who were willing to accept face-to-face interviews was made according to their profiles and the feasibility of interview arrangements. This involved trying to keep a similar sample make-up to that involved in the main questionnaire. First, there was a consideration of any variation in the samples of age, gender, field of study, levels of study and English language ability. The target categories for additional new interviewees were then identified. These included the need for more male volunteers, in their early twenties, studying Natural Sciences. E-mails and telephone calls to the volunteer interviewees asked them to introduce any prospective candidates for interview who met the target categories specified. This stage of research therefore included an element of purposive sampling. The questions were focused on those items (stressful events) identified as either very severe, or as significantly different among groups, depending on such factors as gender, age, field of study, level of English, and whether they took a pre-sessional course or not. The interviews were conducted with the purpose of complementing and deepening the evaluation of the main questionnaire. Each participant had access to average scores of each item and was asked to comment on these by comparing the mean values of each stressful event. They were then asked why they thought any major differences were revealed.

The interviewees were all asked to draw a stress/time graph showing the perceived level of their stressful feelings throughout their period of study. While the questionnaire had provided information about particular areas of stress, it did not identify for how long, and at what time, the stress was experienced. An explanation of any upward or downward stress lines was given to the interviewer, at the same time as the drawing of the line, by the interviewees. It was of great value to the research to be able not just to look at overall statistics of stress perception but to actually see for an individual student how this affected their well-being in the UK. It also provided an answer to the sixth of the seven subsidiary research questions given in Chapter 1. (1.4.)

When conducting the interviews, the aim was to remain neutral and noncommittal on statements made by the interviewees. Since the interviewer has the same ethnic origin and a similar experience of studying in the UK to the interviewees, it is, of course, possible that this may have influenced the respondents' answers. However, it is unlikely that this would have made interviewees any more reluctant to identify stressful experiences than if they had an interviewer from the UK, the host country. In fact the interviewer's ethnicity apparently gave more chance of developing rapport and trust during the interview. However it was necessary to guard, as far as possible, against the possibility that the interviewees might supply answers to fulfill the presumed expectations of the researcher. The interviewer tried to use the same style of interviewing, and explanation of what was required from them, with all the interviewees. It is also possible that replies may have been influenced by the fact that the interviewer was, for many years, a university lecturer, and also much older than most of the interviewees. It is arguable that if the interviewer had been a fellow student then this may have opened up different emphases and explanations. It was, of course, necessary ethically to ensure complete confidentiality about students' identity and this reassurance was given by the interviewer at all stages. A fuller account of this stage of research can be found in chapter 11.

6.3.5. The analysis and comparison of results

All respondents to this research were asked to answer the questions about stress, using a five point Likert-type scale, based on a series of statements all of which were related to their estimate of the level of stress in relation to a number of potentially stressful situations. Some researchers argue that questionnaire data, using a Likert scale, should

only be analysed by non-parametric tests. However, many other researchers make an assumption that such data can be parametric and be used for more sophisticated analysis such as analysis of variance or factor analysis. For the purposes of this research it was decided to make this assumption and use analysis of variance to compare students' perception of different potentially stressful situations. It was also decided to use factor analysis using SPSS (a computerized statistical package for Social Sciences) to identify groups of stresses such as those for human relationships or other socio-cultural situations and to study their overall variance.

6.3.6. Further consideration of the importance, limitations, and validity of the research

(1) ***'When a tree falls down in a deep forest, if nobody listens to it, does that mean the falling sound exists in this world?'*** (Miyabe 1992, p.274. Translation by the researcher.)

This quotation addresses an ontological / epistemological problem. This research seeks to give a voice to the concerns of Japanese students in UKHEIs. Their voices, whether they do, or do not, exist unheard, are intended to be identified by this research. Regardless of the answer to this question, since no empirical research has previously been conducted on stress factors and coping strategies of Japanese students in UKHEIs, any conclusions which can be drawn are likely to be exploratory in nature, rather than designed to test a particular hypothesis.

(2) ***'Until I saw you today, you have been Mr. Kawano, not Mr. Kohno.'*** (Miyabe. 1992, p.273-4. Translation by the researcher.)

This relates to misapprehension. Some Japanese personal names have more than one way of pronunciation when they are written in Chinese characters. Either Kawano or Kohno are possible for the characters '*河野*'. As a result, the speaker seeks to justify her previous misapprehension when she meets the person at their first encounter. ('You have been Mr. Kawano to me until I saw you today, and from today on you will be Mr. Kohno'.) This suggests that individual misperception can be validated with reference to subjectively verifiable factors. In this research, what situations Japanese students in UKHEIs think are stressful were investigated through their subjective perceptions

which may occasionally have involved an unavoidable misapprehension. This means that very careful decisions were required when choosing the optimum methods for this investigation and that the outcome of the research was bound to be interpretive and descriptive rather than scientifically verifiable.

Also related to the second quotation above, there is the issue of objectivity and subjectivity of research. The researcher, of this investigation, is also a Japanese post graduate student in a UKHEI. Silverman (2005) pointed out that 'ultimately, objectivity should be the common aim of all social science'. (p.11) Nevertheless the researcher's subjectivity cannot be completely ignored throughout the whole process of the investigation. Maslow (1954) argued, 'Science was not, is not, and cannot be completely objective, which is to say independent of human values.' (p.20) Science itself is grounded in human conceptual systems, which in turn are culturally grounded. Therefore the researcher attempted to commit to a holistic approach by dynamically combining both subjective and objective realms in order to develop a fuller contextual understanding of the whole phenomenon whilst striving for some degree of contingent truth.

(3) ***'The recent research into brain waves has reached a stage that can detect a time when a person is having a dream whilst sleeping, but it is impossible to know the detail of what the dream is about unless we wake up the person and ask him to tell us about it.'*** (Kamiya, 1974, p.82. Translation by the writer.)

This quotation helps to illustrate why this research takes both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The data obtained from the questionnaire gives a broad picture of the degree of severity of perceived stress and the type of coping strategies adopted by students, whilst the in-depth interviews and e-mails sought to extend and clarify that picture by showing, in actual case studies, how this affected individual students at specific event related times during the period of study in the UK.

However, there were questions that had to be excluded from the survey, partly for reasons of limitations of time and space, and partly because of the possible sensitivity of students if these questions were included. They were:

(1) The urban / rural factor: Where are the students from in Japan?

(2) Financial details – how much do they spend per week/month/year or in total?

(3) Family background – e.g. parents' occupation, parents' income, education.

(4) Details of students' own educational background in Japan

(5) Students' assessments record in the UK

The first question (1) would be useful in trying to evaluate Japanese students' perceptions of stress. After all, there is a big difference between studying and living in London or St. Andrews for those coming from a big city like Tokyo compared with those from a rural area such as parts of Hokkaido or Okinawa. Feeling 'at home' and secure in a new environment may be vital for some students to make optimum progress in their study. Financial problems (2), with high fees and cost of living, can cause considerable anxiety to some students. This is likely to affect students from relatively poor backgrounds more than others, and can therefore be an important factor when evaluating their perceptions of stress and their coping strategies. Family background (3) is enormously important, especially if parents have some UK connections. This can bring considerable support to some students. It would be interesting to study how far students' achievements (4), both personally and in examination results, could act as a predictor of success or failure in their study overseas. A comparison of assessments whilst studying in the UK (5) with perceptions of stress could also be very illuminating. How far, for example, do very able students show more stress because of their perfectionist attitude to their work? It is hoped that all these areas will be dealt with in future studies.

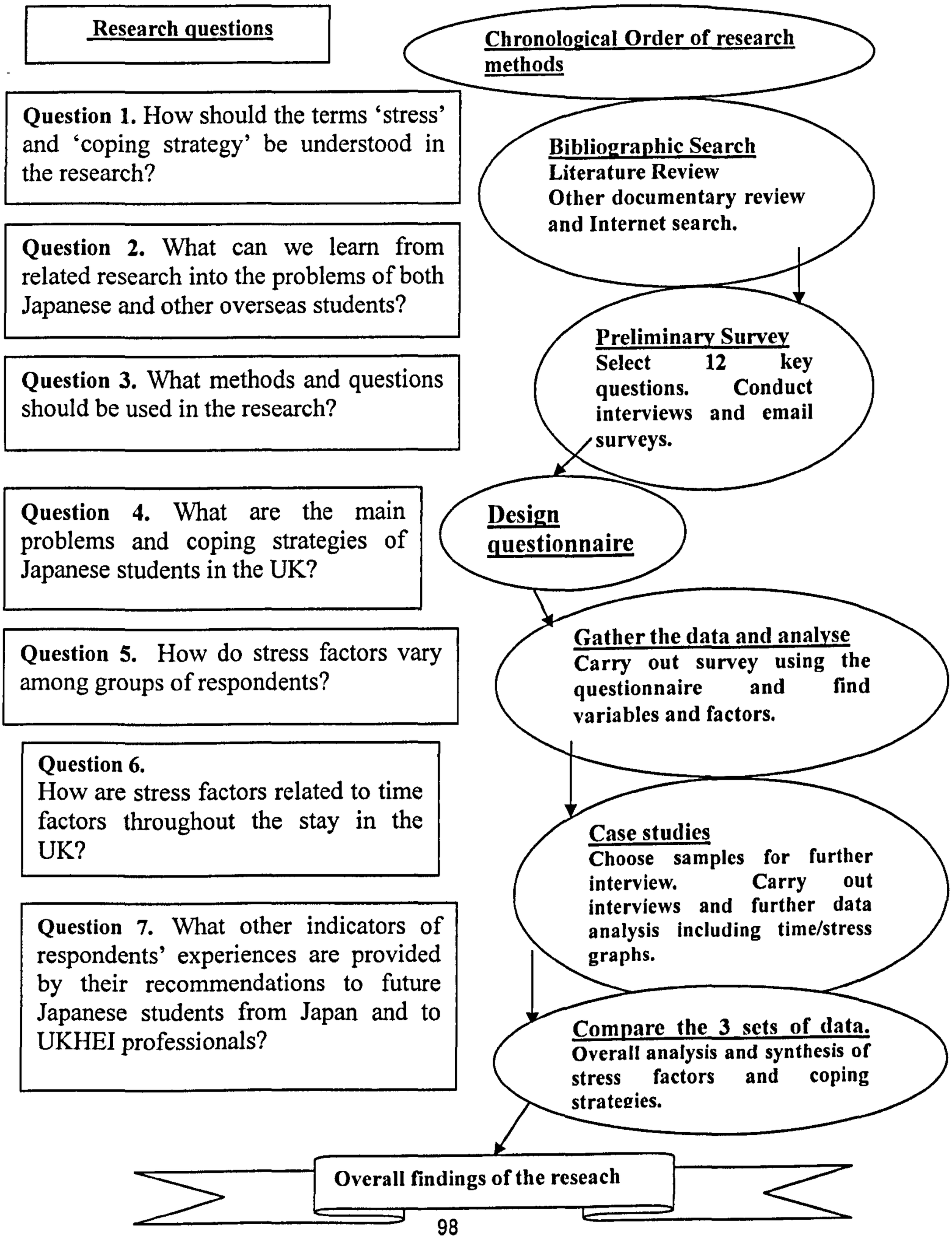
6.4. Summary

The aim of this research, given in Chapter 1, is to discover 'What are the stress factors and coping strategies of Japanese students in UKHEIs?' The summary for this overview of the research design and strategy is provided by using the seven related research questions, also identified in Chapter 1, which are given below (Figure 6.2) in a chronological structural model of the research, together with the methods used to find answers leading to the overall findings of the research.

The next chapter will describe the procedures of the preliminary survey, and its findings

about the main difficulties experienced, and the stress factors of the respondents. These findings have been very useful, together with the information from previous research studies, in formulating questions for the main survey.

Figure 6.2. A chronological structural research model - The seven subsidiary research questions and the methods used in the research



Chapter Seven. The findings of the preliminary survey

7.1. Introduction – Preliminary interview questions

This chapter describes the major findings of a preliminary survey of the experiences of Japanese students who had completed their courses in the UK. This was carried out, with 35 respondents, by face-to-face interview or e-mail and telephone communication. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the main focus of the investigation was on finding stress factors arising from difficulties students encountered during their courses. Other questions were designed to examine student motivation and outcomes, and to obtain advice both for other future overseas Japanese students and also for host institutions in the UK. The survey consisted of open-ended questions which were not susceptible to quantitative analysis. This was done in order to receive wide ranging answers which would be helpful when later formulating questions for the main survey. It also provided a reminder of how extreme some stress can be for individual students and increased the motivation to help future students. The twelve interview questions are shown in the following Table 7.1.

Table 7.1. Preliminary interview questions

Questions about your experience of studying in the UK.

1) What is your motivation for studying in the UK?
2) How did you decide your place of study?
3) When was your study period? What was your field of study?
4) Did you have any previous experiences of studying in a foreign culture? Did you experience any culture shock? Please describe this.
5) What were the main difficulties and stress factors relating to your period of study in the UK? From the viewpoint of:
   (a) Different educational systems and requirements.
   (b) Language differences
   (c) Socio-cultural differences.
6) What do you think are the main factors contributing to the successful completion of your study?
7) Please give any advice to those who will study in the UK in the future.
8) Please give advice to any receiving institutions in the UK. How could they provide more help to students?
9) Do you know anyone who could not finish his or her course? What were the main problems they encountered?
10) During your study period, what did you try to achieve most?
11) If you don't mind, please let me know your age and the scores of your TOEFL, TOEIC, or IELTS.
12) Please give me any comments on this questionnaire. Your name will not be given in any subsequent publication.

7.2. Profiles of participants

There were 35 participants, including 19 interviewees and 16 email and telephone respondents, in this preliminary survey. Seven respondents were male (20%) and 28 were female (80%). This percentage of female respondents was 14 % higher than that for all Japanese female students shown by HESA (2001) and 10 % higher than the percentage of females involved in the main survey. Respondents were aged between 23 and 60, with the majority in their thirties. Nine of the 35 students had received scholarships. 26 were self-funded. Seven of the 35 had never worked full-time after graduating from Japanese universities, and were supported financially throughout their study by their family. Most of the rest had work experience and financed their study, at least in part, from their own savings and often with some help from their families. Nine respondents were married. Three other participants left their families in Japan, and four were living with their spouses in the UK while they were studying. There were twelve English language teachers and three trainee teachers among the respondents, making a total of fifteen respondents (about 42 %) with training in courses in the UK such as the 'Teaching of English as a Second or Other Language' (TESOL) or 'Teaching of English as a Foreign Language' (TEFL). This was partly because of the researcher's similar background as a university teacher of English and the availability of suitable contacts to take part in the study at short notice. Five of the 35 respondents were PhD students (15%), but most were enrolled on MA or MSc courses. The following Table 7.2 provides all the information about the final list of respondents.

Table 7.2. List of participants in the preliminary survey

	Degree	Field	Period	Sex	Additional information
1	MA	TESOL	94-	F	ELT(EnglishLanguage teacher),
2	Diploma	Lang.Educ.	96-97	M	ELT,married, Scholarship
3	MA	TESOL	96-	F	
4	MA	Hist.Arch.	96-	F	Married
5	MA	TESOL	96-	F	ELT, married
6	MA, PhD	Anthrop.	95-	F	
7	MA, PhD	TESOL	93-99	F	ELT

8	MA, PhD	Soc.Work	93-	F	Married
9	MA,-PhD	Soc.Work	93-99	M	Married
10	MA	TESOL	98-99	F	ELT
11	MA	TESOL	92-	F	ELT
12	MA	Peace Stud.	98-99	F	
13	MSc	Soc.Anthrop.	99-00	F	Scholarship
14	MA	Anthrop.	98-99	M	
15	MA	TESOL	96-	F	ELT,
16	MA	Soc.Educ.	96-97	F	Scholarship
17	Mphil	Hist.Arch.	94-96	M	
18	MA	TESOL	99-00	F	ELT
19	MA	Educ. for Int. Dev.	99-00	M	Scholarship
20	MA	Womens' Studies	99-00	F	
21	MA	Dev.Stud.	99-00	F	Married
22	MA	Womens' Stud.	96?	F	
23	MSc	Medical Econ.	96?	F	Scholarship,
24	MA	Lang.Educ.	99-00	F	Scholarship
25	MA	Educ.Dev.	95-	F	
26	BA+MA	Engl.Educ.	95	F	ELT, scholarship
27	MA-	TESOL	96-	F	ELT, scholarship, married
28	Sp.St.	Comp.Educ.	98-99	F	ELT, married
29	Sp.St.	Comp.Educ.	98-99	F	ELT,
30	MA	Hist. of Music	97-	F	Married
31	Diploma	Music	94-	F	ELT, scholarship
32	MA, PhD	Education	96-	F	
33	MA	Educ. (TEFL)	99-00	F	
34	MA	Russian	99-	M	
35	MSc.	Econ.	99-	M	
	Degree	**Field**	**Period**	**Sex**	**Additional information**

Notes: Underlined boxes above indicate participants who were interviewed in face to face situations.

7.3. Problems encountered by Japanese students in the UK and some of their coping strategies

7.3.1. Language difficulties

Nearly all the respondents had serious language difficulties which they cited as their greatest problem area. There were however two exceptional cases (Nos. 2, 17), among the 35 respondents, who both reported that language was not a big problem. No. 2 deliberately chose a diploma course, hoping to benefit from the relatively undemanding course requirements. He explained that if he had chosen an MA course, he would have had much more difficulty. Instead, his greatest stress was the result of feeling homesick after leaving his family in Japan. He missed his 2 year old daughter so much that he actually wept, when he saw her image on his PC, near the beginning of his course.

The other student (No. 17), who was specialising in the History of Architecture, did not find English a serious problem because he had communicated in English, ever since his childhood, with his Japanese mother who was born and educated in the USA. Although he said he did not have any difficulty in everyday communication in English, he was helped with his dissertation by a friend, a Canadian poet.

The main types of language related problems, described by respondents, were 'reading speed in English', 'speaking and giggling', 'writing coursework' and 'listening'. Examples of each difficulty are given below.

(a) Reading speed in English

One respondent described an episode she experienced relating to reading speed. Given a long list of reference books to consult by course tutors, she felt desperate and one day dared to confess to the course tutor that it was impossible for her to do all the reading. The tutor then asked her how long it took her to read ten pages. "About an hour and half, " she replied. Then the tutor said; "Very slow. Read faster." Some of her hall mates then told her that she should read at least 20 pages per hour. A more senior Japanese student taught her a speed reading technique which combined note-taking on cards. She felt greatly encouraged and grateful, since all these people offered practical advice, rather

than mere words of comfort. She worked very hard throughout her course and one of her tutors even recommended her for the award of a distinction.

(b) Speaking and Giggling

A number of respondents noted the difficulty and stress they experienced due to their inability to speak fluently. A respondent, who was a journalist, had little difficulty in writing, but being by nature a talkative person, and surrounded by mostly Italian colleagues, she felt frustrated when she could not take her turn to speak. This caused her to redouble her efforts to participate. For this reason, she felt her ability to speak and listen to English improved considerably. One respondent wrote that, throughout her entire study period, speaking and writing English was stressful. Although she attended an in-session English language course, this did not help to relieve her stress. She wrote that, even now, living in the UK with an English husband she had married after her course, she still felt stress and humiliation because her English had not yet even approached the level of a native speaker.

In Chapter 3.5.3 an example was given of an American male teacher in Japan who did not realise that the giggling of his female students was probably in reaction to a stressful classroom situation and who abandoned his class in fury. Another example of this type of misunderstanding was given by a female respondent on a one-year BA course in England supported by a Rotary scholarship. She telephoned a local Rotarian, who had helped her a great deal, to thank him and to say good-bye. The Rotarian expressed great regret because he had intended to invite her to his house before her departure. When she heard this, she responded by giggling, a reaction which even now she cannot explain adequately, but one which perhaps reflected the function of giggling in Japanese discourse, where it is not used to convey contempt or sarcasm. It is just an expression of either 'childishness' or a way of avoiding negative feelings. In any case, at the time of the telephone call, the Rotarian's intended invitation could not be accepted, but he was unfortunately severely offended by her giggling. This caused her deep remorse.

This anecdote is perhaps an extreme example of how profoundly misunderstandings, generated by linguistic and cultural difference, can lead to communication breakdown. In response to such difficulties, there were occasions when students chose to withdraw from contact with the host community and adopt what has been termed 'Japanese

village mentality', a form of ghettoisation which sometimes provided a temporary respite and support.

(c) Writing coursework

Several respondents commented on the difficulty of writing coursework. Examples of difficulties in academic writing they encountered were 'making a point of one's own', 'the importance of structuring', 'quality style', 'logical connectors and technical terms including jargon' and 'clear statements'. One also mentioned that she did not know what 'critical thinking' meant. She wrote, in a 'critical review' of an article, that she agreed with the content of the article completely and only realised afterwards that she had made a mistake.

Two respondents had completely opposite experiences about the failure to use classroom participation in course assessment. One of them was quite fluent in English and his motivation and fluency was sufficiently high to enable him to always make an effective contribution to class discussions, by asking questions or giving opinions. In an e-mail communication he explained that it was a discouraging experience for him not to have been given a better mark, since the tutor assessed his coursework only on the basis of his written work, without taking his classroom contribution into account.

In contrast, the other wrote the following:

'I am particularly poor at speaking English, which was a cause of stress and depression until the end of my course. Fortunately the department, to which I belonged, judged students' records only on the basis of written assignments or examinations, and did not regard classroom contributions as factors for assessment. So my grades were not affected by my awkwardness in speaking.'

(d) Listening

Eight respondents all reported problems related to listening. Some experienced difficulty in understanding regional varieties of English used, for example, by bus drivers. Some attributed this to having greater familiarity with American English. One estimated that she understood only 15 % of the spoken English she encountered in

lectures, supplementing this with guesswork or requests for help to those sitting nearby. Recommended coping strategies in this area varied from 'resigned acceptance', to strategies involving the recording of lectures and transcribing tapes, to watching TV and attending other lectures as often as possible.

(e) Summary of language difficulties

The language problems for most Japanese students in the UK, at any level of education, were formidable, whether in the area of speaking, listening, writing or reading. Such problems are encountered by many foreign students in Britain, but in the case of Japanese speakers it is compounded by the left-branching nature of Japanese, and right branching characteristic of written English. (Yamamoto, Y. A.1994)

Such problems are often made worse by pejorative stereotypes which betray a lack of understanding of these difficulties. The following comment, for example, illustrates the negative attitudes which Japanese students occasionally have to confront:

'The reticence displayed by Japanese students and the pauses can be puzzling, frustrating, and embarrassing to Westerners. ... Bald comments I have heard from European students include they (Japanese learners of English) are so silly, so quiet, so slow, they don't understand my question, they don't know any English.' (Gray 1994, p.6)

The writer continued: 'These are misconceptions with very unfortunate outcomes for all concerned. The results can too often lead to ghettoisation and a hardening of racial stereotypes. '

They also provide evidence of the traumatic encounters Japanese learners of English sometimes experience in the UK.

7.3.2. Educational difficulties

There were only four respondents who did not mention this area as a problem. One reply related to differences in the academic calendar, although this did not appear to be a significant cause of stress in comparison with issues relating to teaching and learning

styles, teacher-student relationships or participation strategies in group discussions. Examples of these issues are given below.

(a)Teaching and learning styles

One respondent wrote that he liked the British style of teaching because it invited students to 'do more of it in your own way'. He wrote that he could happily accept this difference. Two respondents went so far as to contrast Japanese universities negatively with their British counterparts, on the grounds that they did not motivate students enough to learn by themselves. However less positive comments regarding British teaching styles were offered by nine respondents. Among these were remarks such as 'I wished teachers would be more supportive', 'Teachers should spend more time teaching or imparting their expertise during the limited lecture time, rather than allocating time for discussion among students'and 'I expected a more practical approach about how to be a good English teacher and, compared to the American MA course I took, the difference was too big for me!'

One argued that if more research-based courses or methods were introduced in Japanese university education, the gap between the two countries' education systems, and hence the difficulties encountered in this area, would be minimised. Respondents who had studied on pre-sessional courses reflected positively, often with much gratitude, on the practical support these had provided.

(b) Teacher-student relationships

Greater expectation of more help from teachers was revealed in comments made by six respondents. One, for instance, remarked that she was compelled, against her nature, to be assertive in initiating tutorials to discuss problems relating to coursework. Another complained about problems caused by a change of her supervisors. A third student commented on the lack of instruction or guidance about how to write coursework. Another difficulty, identified by the survey, was that students were very reluctant to call teachers by their first names. This practice, no doubt, seemed very alien due to the conventional use of the honorific *sensei* in Japanese as a sign of respect for one's teacher. One said that he continued to struggle with forms of address, even after his return to Japan, when corresponding with teachers in the UK.

(c) Group discussion and participation strategies

Six respondents addressed this topic directly, whilst three others raised related concerns in their comments on language difficulties. One stated that he did not enjoy discussion, although presentations did not cause a problem. Another respondent remarked that class discussion was initially a source of stress to her, since only 'pushy' people spoke out and she could not speak loudly enough. She tried to participate at first, but gradually became resigned to differences relating to her cultural background. As a result she ceased attempting to intervene during discussions and instead waited for her turn to speak. Another respondent noted 'there were frequent opportunities for group work, and I was greatly surprised by the way English students take it for granted that they can speak out in class. Since my command of language was limited, I tried first to listen to what was discussed in order to understand as much as possible. It was however only later that I managed to cope by reflecting on the topic.' Another wrote 'I could not get accustomed to speaking out at first, but after noticing that the English people were not so self-assertive, as I previously thought, I felt more relaxed.' A respondent also observed that lectures and classes were often held in a group around a round table. She explained: 'This interactive-oriented class was a pressure for me at first, since I was used to Japanese lecture-orientated classes, but nevertheless I felt compelled to say something. After I realised that speaking out was appreciated and added to my credit, I became able to state what I believed, without hesitation, even though I made lots of mistakes.'

While some respondents were able to adjust, others experienced greater trauma. One respondent, for example, in her replies about language difficulty, showed vividly how feelings of language disadvantage can be a cause of great distress; an experience which indicates the need for both host institutions and fellow students to develop sensitivity to such feelings.

'Students were expected to contribute to classes, but I did not enjoy feeling pressured to say something in class each time. And when classes finished, without my having had a chance to talk, I went home utterly distressed. When my turn to give a presentation came, it was worse. My mind went completely blank and I was left in an even more demoralised state of mind than I anticipated. The depression caused by my

unsuccessful presentation was far more serious than my inability to join in group discussions and I cried to myself at home, 'No! No! Enough of it!' My coping strategy was to tell myself to use this bitterness as a springboard, persuading myself 'no pain; no gain' repeatedly, so that I would not drop out. Later when my English was good enough to understand what other talkative students were speaking about in class, I found that they were in fact often talking about matters of irrelevance to the topic, or sometimes making obvious points. I learned that it is perfectly all right that I should speak out only when I knew points that no one else had mentioned or when I had questions that I really needed to ask. As a result I could think more calmly. Even now my ability to speak English is awful but, realising that it has improved since a year ago, I feel encouraged although my progress is very slow.'

(d) Summary of educational difficulties

The three categories of educational difficulties, that have been identified, illustrate that British educators often adopt approaches which are less teacher-centred and more interactive. The data clearly shows that Japanese students are not accustomed to these approaches and that those conflicting value systems, operating within British and Japanese educational institutions, are profoundly related to differences in discourse conventions which are themselves grounded in society and culture. In contrast to language difficulties, somewhat more positive responses were found regarding strategies for coping with educational problems, with many students viewing the differences as challenging but surmountable.

7.3.3. Social and cultural difficulties

Many difficulties, identified by students, revealed common and well-known differences between British and Japanese cultural norms and conventions. The categories shown below and identified from the data included 'human relationships', 'different social systems', 'racial discrimination', 'time arrangement', 'climate', 'food', 'health problems' and 'different communication styles'.

(a) Human relationships

These were mentioned by four respondents. Two of them commented that the need for reducing relationships with other Japanese students, in order to include more friends

from other countries, actually contributed to stress. As was discussed in the language difficulty section, while friends of the same nationality could be a source of support, over-dependence on them could prevent students developing broader circles of friends.

Other concerns surrounding human relationships, indicated by the survey, are 'the difficulty of understanding people with different ideas, values, and beliefs', and 'the danger of appearing rude'. A respondent wrote that, after she was told by her friend that she looked aloof, she made an effort not to appear too modest or reticent. References to other isolated incidents included a confrontation with a vegetarian hall-mate over the smell of cooking ham, and the return of her book in a poor condition by another hall-mate.

(b) Differences between social systems

One respondent described her initial stress, caused by the difference of social systems, in terms of a lack of 'socio-cultural efficiency'. 'Slow administrative procedures, delayed bank statements, long queues at shopping checkouts or bus-stops were all stressful at first but, after getting accustomed, the stress reduced.' Another referred to similar problems when he tried to use humour as a coping strategy. One recollected a time when she saw a notice board, at an underground station in London, saying that the repair work for the escalator would take eight months to complete and commented that, whenever she saw the sign, she assumed that it was a mistake for eight weeks. To some Japanese observers, unexpected delays and mishaps of this kind may prove to be a source of 'culture shock' and, according to Reischauer (1994), 'it would be hard to find any large country in our contemporary world that runs more efficiently, smoothly, fairly, and openly than Japan.' (p.8) Train punctuality in Japan is an obvious example of this.

(c) Racial discrimination

There were four respondents who commented on this topic. One of them wrote as follows:

'Since I lived with a Japanese spouse in the UK, I was not aware of suffering from stress. However, there were six to seven occasions when I was walking in the street and was teased. This was indeed an upsetting experience. More than half of these

occasions were caused by kids. They were not too serious, but apparently these were incidents of racial discrimination against Asian people. There was no actual harm, such as physical injury, and most of the perpetrators were motivated by the desire to make fun. Nevertheless, it made me feel quite upset. Now I feel nervous when I pass by a group of kids playing on the roadside or a couple of youngsters walking towards me and fear the possibility of them saying something nasty. If possible, I would cross the street or find myself making a detour. Nevertheless I believe, in general, that this is a country that provides a very comfortable life for everybody. In comparison, Japan is a much more exclusive and closed country and I admit that there is often strong discrimination against foreigners.'

A respondent's coping strategy for a similar problem may be worth mentioning here:

'There was a stress that came from my nervousness in regard to racial and cultural discrimination. Then I began to think that I must be proud of being Japanese, and so I made an effort not to worry too much about matters of discrimination. Gradually my effort to develop closer contact with students of many nationalities was understood by friends and I felt I could relax little by little.'

(d) Time management

Three respondents experienced time management problems which were all quite likely to occur when studying in a foreign country. One respondent reflected that throughout her stay she always felt as if she was being chased by a 'time monster' when carrying out her studies. This is typical for students experiencing heavy workloads and coursework deadlines. One respondent's fears for the future caused stress to him, in his second year, experiencing what is probably a widespread feeling for those nearing the end of a course. On the other hand, an older respondent indicated that she did not feel that she was much older than other students during her study period. This may be because, in Japan, older people are more pressurised with heavier responsibility because of the Confucian ideology of seniority.

(e) Climate, food, and health

There were four statements that can be included in this item. One respondent wrote, 'I felt a stress that I should not be ill. The necessity to be in good health itself was a source of stress.' One wrote, 'I cannot tell which came first between my mental stress and physical illness.' One simply wrote, 'Food was a stress for me.' Another wrote, 'I guess that I had stress because of the difference of climate. My coping strategy was just to eat and sleep.'

(f) Communication style

This is naturally interrelated with language problems but, when discussed in terms of cultural norms, three of the respondents saw this in a cultural context. One wrote:

'Even when I had a problem, no one would understand it unless I managed to express it. There is no '*ishin denshin*' (by heart the heart is conveyed.) Nobody interferes in another's action. Things get broken often. How many times I looked at notices saying 'Out of Order'! The most surprising thing in my study life in the UK was that silence was apt to be misinterpreted as ignorance. In Japan, there are sayings, 'In silence there is a blossom' or 'better leave it unsaid.' .....In Japanese language classes students are trained only to take notes and it is therefore impossible to change one's personality immediately after arriving in the UK.'

Occasionally such conclusions gave rise to more overtly negative impressions of British society and what were perceived to be the prevalent attitudes towards Japanese people held by the host community. One wrote: 'As one who often depends, like me, on non-verbal understanding and communication, those Europeans, who entirely trust language expressions, are beyond comprehension. Fundamentally I think it comes from the difference of our religions. I thought there were mixed feelings towards the Japanese that contained both jealousy and contempt.'

(g) No stress

Some respondents seemed to experience very few negative reactions, even to possible stressful situations. One, for example, wrote: 'although I experienced lots of differences,

I did not feel stress. .... I believe that you should never do things that you would not like others to do to you. I think this is a universal rule. Unless we violate it, it is possible for us to cope with any differences.'

There were a number of comments about strategies for relieving stress, including having cultural breaks or fun. Examples given included attending parties, visiting museums, going to cinemas or pubs, playing sports, or enjoying music in a club.

(h) Summary of socio-cultural difficulties

The replies of respondents showed that a wide variety of social and cultural differences had presented them with some difficulties and stress. Problems involving relationships were probably the most stressful but one should not underestimate the level of stress that could be experienced, in a variety of difficult experiences, by individual students.

7.4. Conclusion

Stress factors have been considered here in three categories related to language, education, and socio-cultural differences. Although it is not possible to generalize about effective coping strategies, the overall results show that the respondents *somehow* coped with these problems and managed to satisfactorily finish their courses. Nevertheless some problems clearly remained unresolved and there was much stress that could have been avoided by improved preparation in Japan and improved strategies of support in the UK. Negative and positive responses to socio-cultural difficulties probably gave the clearest expression of how students were personally affected, in different ways, by the experience of living and studying in Britain. This preliminary data indicated that stress levels were often severe, especially those relating to language difficulties. In many ways, these preliminary findings indicated the complexity and variety of student experiences, and highlighted the need for a more detailed investigation, described in Chapter 8, involving a much larger sample of Japanese students in the UKHEIs.

Chapter Eight. The Main Survey: the Experience of Stress

'Der liebe Gott steckt im Detail.' (God dwells in detail.) **by Aby Warburg (1866-1929)**

8.1. Foreword

This chapter, together with chapters 9 and 10, reports the procedures used and the main findings from the answers to the questionnaire. The rationale for, and the design of, this questionnaire has been described in Chapter 6.3.2. Chapter 8 deals with the procedures used in the survey and then goes on to report the responses to questions concerning background information of the respondents, followed by the kind of difficulties encountered, and the resulting levels of stress identified by the questionnaire respondents. Chapter 9 deals with their coping strategies, and chapter 10 looks at the answers provided to other questions related to their experience of studying and living in the UK. A full summary of all the answers to the questionnaire can be found in Appendix III.

8.2. Introduction

In order to identify stress factors and coping strategies of Japanese students in UKHEIs the main questionnaire (See Appendix II) was designed to examine their experiences from a multidisciplinary angle. This involved focusing on three specific areas which are all distinctively prominent and of similar relative importance. These are the academic, linguistic and socio-cultural dimensions of experiences of overseas study. Equal weight was given to each of these three areas in preparing the questionnaire.

As explained in Chapter 7, although the qualitative data, obtained from the preliminary study by interview identified students' problems and difficulties in some detail, it was not possible from this data to compare their degree of severity. The quantitative data from the main questionnaire provided answers showing the types of stress factors experienced, and also the degree of severity in much wider scope. The data also provided a better understanding of the relationships of the three areas of students' experiences; academic, linguistic, and socio-cultural, including how far they overlap with each other.

The next section 8.3 considers the research methods used, including a description of the procedures of data collection, followed by 8.4 which summarises all the respondents' profiles. 8.5 discusses students' difficulties in the three areas of experience, and 8.6 deals with further statistical features using other analytical tools to examine details of the questionnaire findings. This will provide answers to the fifth of the seven subsidiary research questions, given in Chapter 1.4, which is 'how do stress factors vary among groups of respondents?' Section 8.7 deals with self evaluation and observation by respondents, and finally 8.8 provides more general conclusions.

8.3. Research procedures - The sampling frame

As outlined in Chapter 6, the process of constructing, issuing and collecting the questionnaire was carried out from March 2001 to March 2003, both in UK and in Japan, and resulted in 285 valid responses. This was about 6.5 % of all Japanese students in these institutions at that time.

The Higher Education Statistic Agency (HESA) provided a set of statistical data (HESA, 2001) which contained an Excel file of full-time Japanese domiciled students in UKHEIs. According to this, the total number of Japanese students in UKHEIs in 2000/01 was 6469. This was about 25 % of all the Japanese who were studying in the UK for educational or training purposes or learning technical skills, a total of 26,297 during the year 2000. (Ministry of Justice, Web Japan > Statistics > Education) There were also, of course, many Japanese EFL students at private colleges throughout the UK, to mention just one example of the many purposes for their study in the UK.

At the time of distributing the main questionnaire, a decision was made to involve only full-time students. This was important in order to increase the precision and validity of the research. Of course, part-time students' stress from socio-cultural experiences may not be very different from full-time students. Nevertheless, they were excluded because it was thought that their stress from educational experiences was not usually as multi-dimensional as that of full-time or degree/certificate seeking students, who have to undergo the hardships or pressures caused by examinations and/or coursework. This decision was necessary in order to compare more accurately students' perception of stress in the three areas of experiences. (language, academic and socio-cultural)

The same reasoning was applied when a decision was made to involve students of the Junior Year Abroad (JYA) in this research. They all gain credit after the course which usually requires an examination or essay writing. The minimum period of stay in the UK accepted for this research is 10 months. The survey included students who were enrolled on a one-year foundation course or any other Higher Education course such as a post-graduate certificate or diploma or an MA or MSc degree.

Various studies such as Higuchi (1982), Yamamoto, H. (1992), Iwakiri (1993), Kikuchi (1993), Isoda (1997, 1999), Tomioka (2001) all found that short-term overseas students suffer more acute culture shock, which affects their attitude towards learning from their experiences and enhances their motivation to learn English. However, their level of English was not found to have risen considerably after the programmes, especially from the viewpoint of long-term acquisition. With these findings in mind, it was decided to focus this research on an investigation of long-term full-time students only, studying for a minimum of ten months in UKHEIs.

Although the total population of the target group at the time of survey was about 4433, this figure was not a clear-cut parameter because some students, who had already finished their courses, were also included in the survey. It was decided that narrowing down the choice of respondents by other criteria, such as gender, age, level of study, field of study, and places of institution would not be very helpful to the research. Indeed comparing differences of stress problems among these groups of students was one of the research objectives.

8.4. The profiles of respondents

The details of respondents' profiles which follow relate first to basic information about students' background before their arrival in the UK. This is followed by an account of the students' motivation leading to a decision to study in the UK. Finally there are details about their chosen UKHEIs and their course of study.

(a) Background information about respondents

The information about respondents' background prior to their arrival in the UK included their name, gender, age, family status, sources of finance, previous employment, educational background and level of English language ability. A full descriptive account of the data is shown in Appendix III, while a brief summary is given below.

70 % of the respondents were female, a slightly higher percentage than the 63 % female for all Japanese students identified by HESA (CH, 2001). About 60 % were in their twenties and 90 % between 20 and 39. Most of respondents were single (87%), and had no previous full-time employment (58%). Less than half (45%) had a single source of finance, 30% being funded solely by their families. About half of the respondents (51%) had either graduated from, or were still enrolled in Japanese universities. 52 % of the respondents had been abroad more than five times before starting their courses in the UK and about 60 % of all respondents had previous experience studying overseas including short-term language learning trips. Only 10 % were going overseas for the first time. The following table (8.1) gives a brief summary of selected profiles of the respondents.

Table 8.1. Brief summary of the survey respondents' profiles

1) 70 % were female.
2) 87% were single.
3) 58 % were in their twenties.
4) 40 % were completely funded by their families.
5) 75 % had higher or post secondary education in Japan.
6) 50 % had more than 5 previous trips abroad.
7) 60 % had previous overseas study experiences
8) The level of English ranged from IELTS 5 to 7.5 with one third at the level 6.
9) 85 % had studied English outside the formal school as well as within it.
10) 58 % had no previous full-time employment.

The level of English ability of respondents varied widely in IELTS test scores (or the equivalent TOEFL scores) with 14 % gaining higher than IELTS 7.5, 9 % lower than 5.5, and the majority (77%) achieving 6 (25%), 6.5(31%) or 7 (21%). In most UKHEIs the minimum IELTS score required for enrolling on Master degree courses is 6.5 or 7,

and for Bachelor degree courses is 5.5 or 6. However, since the time of taking the test by them varied considerably, from prior to their course to a more recent date during the course, this must be remembered when considering their level of English language. Some students did in fact improve their English ability quite rapidly, in a short span of time, especially after arriving in an English speaking environment. The eagerness of Japanese students to learn English is undoubtedly very high despite the considerable difficulty, which derives from the sheer difference of the two languages. 85% of respondents had studied English outside the formal school system, as well as within it, in Japan. This reflects the dominant emphasis placed on English study in Japan, which was also shown in students' answers about their motivation.

(b) Respondents' motivation to study in the UK

The survey found that Japanese students' desire to learn English was the most important motivational factor for studying in the UK. A total of 226 respondents (about 80%) emphasized this purpose by rating it as either four or five on a five-point scale. The second, but almost equally important, motivation can be described as a personal interest fulfillment, with 78% attaching positive importance (4+5 points) to this goal. It was, of course, clear from the profiles that overseas study is no longer experienced solely by academic elites, and is no longer perceived as a rare privilege of dedication to national development as it was once considered in Japan. 60 % of respondents chose study in the UK 'for an academic purpose', 59% 'to discover new opportunities in life', 57 % 'to learn more about UK culture and people', and 50 % 'to help finding new employment opportunities.' About half of the respondents achieved their first choice of the place of study. In Japan this is rarely achieved. About one in three respondents decided to study in the United Kingdom partly because they believed that the UK would be both safer and better than other alternative countries. Only one in five said this was not a factor affecting their decision to study in the UK. The table 8.2 which follows shows the results of the questionnaire. (Question A.6)

Table 8.2. Motivation of the survey respondents to study in the UK. (Bold style is used to show the highest percentage answer for each motivating factor.)

Motivation	5=Most applicable	4=Fairly appli-cable	3=Neith-er yes nor no	2=Not so applic-able	1=Not at all ap-plicable	N/A	Mean (S.D.)
In order to improve my present work skills or position in Japan.	35 (12.3%)	32 (11.2%)	9 (6.7%)	25 (8.8%)	**171 (60.6%)**	3 (1.1%)	2.06 (1.50)
In order to get another / better employment in future.	68 (23.9%)	**75 (26.3%)**	45 (15.8%)	25 (8.8%)	69 (24.2%)	3 (1.1%)	3.17 (1.51)
For mainly academic interest	**92 (32.3%)**	79 (27.7%)	40 (14.0%)	33 (11.6%)	40 (14.0%)	1 (0.4%)	3.53 (1.41)
To pursue my personal interests (e.g. hobbies or my own tastes)	**124 (43.5%)**	98 (34.4%)	28 (9.8%)	15 (5.3%)	18 (6.3%)	2 (0.7%)	4.04 (1.15)
To learn or improve English	**126 (44.2%)**	100 (35.1%)	27 (9.5%)	13 (4.6%)	17 (6.0%)	2 (0.7%)	4.08 (1.12)
To know UK culture and people	80 (28.1%)	**83 (29.1%)**	50 (17.5%)	40 (14.0%)	30 (10.55)	2 (0.7%)	3.51 (1.32)
To change my life course into a new situation.	**93 (32.6%)**	76 (26.7%)	38 (13.3%)	33 (11.6%)	43 (15.1%)	2 (0.7%)	3.51 (1.44)
Because UK education is at a higher level and is more beneficial	29 (10.2%)	**72 (25.3%)**	63 (22.1%)	63 (22.1%)	55 (19.3%)	3 (1.1%)	2.85 (1.29)

(c) The UKHEIs of respondents who participated in this survey

The UK Higher Education Institutions that were involved in this research by providing respondents for the questionnaire are given below:

(i) The institutions from which more than 20 respondents participated - Cambridge, Oxford, The London Institute and the London University Institute of Education (Total = 97).

(ii) Between 10 and 19 - Essex, King Alfred's College Winchester, Leicester, Nottingham, Oxford Brookes, SOAS and Sussex. (Total = 90)

(iii) Between 5 and 9 - Bradford, Edinburgh College of Art, Kent Institute of Art and Design, Newcastle upon Tyne, Reading Sheffield, (Total = 32)

(iv)Less than 5 - Bath, Birkbeck, Birmingham, Brighton, Camberwell, Cardiff, Cardiff Wales, Christie's College, Durham, Essex, Falmouth College of Art, Gloucester, Imperial College, King's College London, Kingston, Lancaster, Leeds, Manchester, Portsmouth, Royal Holloway, Strathclyde, Surrey Guildford, Surrey Roehampton, The Complementary Therapies College of Wales, Exeter, Newport, Swansea, Warwick, Westminster and York. (Total = 62.)

(The total number of responses shown above is 281 because 2 respondents wrote just London and 2 failed to reply to this question.)

(d) Respondents' fields of study and degree levels

The distribution of respondents' course levels divided into four groups with broadly equal numbers in each of the four groups (BA, MA/Sc, PhD and Certificate/Diploma/ Foundation) which each had more than 20 % of the total respondents. 35 % were studying on courses from 10 months to one year while about 88 % of respondents had periods of stay in the UK of less than 5 years. Nearly half (47%) were studying in the field of Humanities, followed by Social Sciences (35%) and Natural Sciences (8%). This breakdown is similar to the distribution of students identified by HESA (2001), which existed at the time of undertaking the research. However this was not completely by coincidence since, having noted a shortage of students in certain categories, the researcher made a special effort, with the help of other colleagues, to try to identify more students in these categories who were willing to take part in the study. The percentage of those who took pre-sessional language and orientation courses was 47%. Over two thirds of respondents who had taken these pre-sessional courses chose one of

the two highest categories of appreciation for the quality of their preparatory course.

The most frequent type of accommodation was the university hall of residence where the degree of satisfaction was generally high. Three quarters of respondents said they received help from many people in their student life in the UK. Less than half of their close friends were fellow Japanese and one third had close friends from Britain. The majority had close friends from many different countries, with China and Taiwan being most often mentioned. The fact that telephone and e-mails to Japan were quite frequent suggests that this was one element likely to reduce students' feelings of isolation or loneliness during their time abroad.

The question about whom to consult, during times of difficulty, brought a variety of responses largely dependent on the type of difficulty. In academic areas, teachers or course tutors were most frequently sought out, while on language issues, a British friend was most often consulted. In contrast, socio-cultural difficulties were most often discussed with fellow nationals. Counsellors were rarely asked for help and only students' relatives were less consulted. Very few respondents reported feelings of nervousness, tiredness, or illness whilst generally positive responses were given to items referring to happiness and fulfillment. In fact it was remarkable that as many as 91 % of respondents chose one of two positive answers (most or fairly applicable) to the statement that 'My overseas study experience was worthwhile'. The mean score for this question item was as high as 4.49 on a 5 point scale. (S.D. = 0.75)

8.5. Stressful events, areas of possible stress and the degrees of stress

8.5.1. The levels of stress experienced by individual students

Two sets of questions in the questionnaire referred to stress factors and each set had different categories of stressful events. The first one (*Questionnaire* Part I - B) used nine broad areas to reveal the degree of difficulties of students' experiences for which they were asked to select from the very difficult or stressful (5) to very little stress (1). These areas were drawn from previous studies including those of Yamamoto, T. (1986) and Yao and Matsubara (1990). It was found that academic difficulty caused the highest stress (71% by adding the two highest answers, 4 and 5). After that language stress came second (65%) and financial concerns third. (44%) The following table (8.3) and

figure (8.1) show the actual distribution pattern of responses.

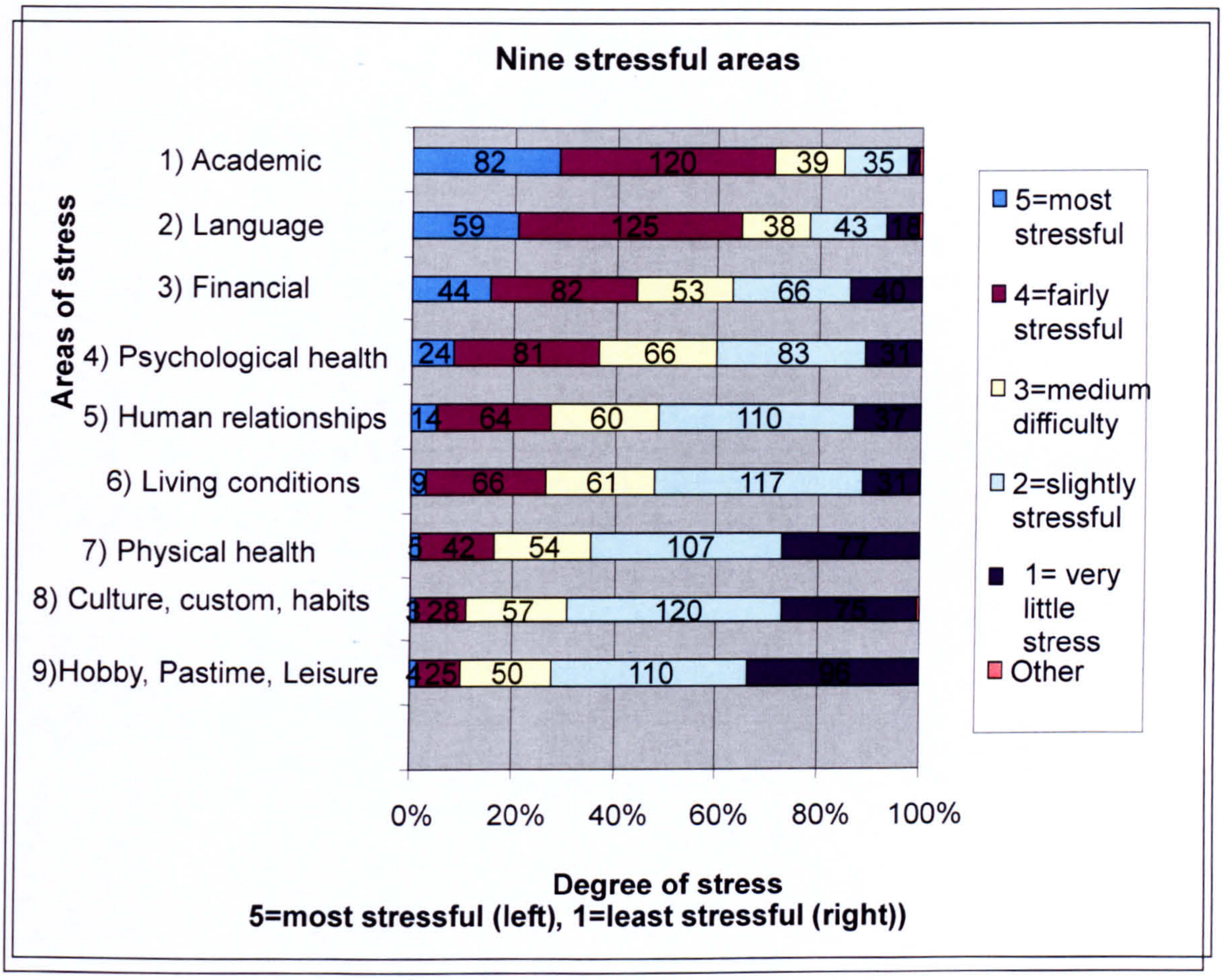
Table 8.3. Levels of stress in the nine areas from the survey (Result from replies to the questionnaire Part I–B. The highest answer is shown in bold.)

Areas of possible difficulty / scale	5= Ex-tremely stressful	4 = Fairly stressful	3 = Medium difficulty	2 = Slightly stressful	1 = Very little stress	Other	% 5+4	SD	Mean N=285.
1) Academic	82	**120**	39	35	7	2	71	1.06	3.83
2) Language	59	**125**	38	43	18	2	65	1.17	3.57
3) Financial	44	**82**	53	66	40	0	44	1.30	3.08
4) Psychological health (anxiety)	24	81	66	**83**	31	0	37	1.16	2.94
5) Human relationships	14	64	60	**110**	37	0	27	1.11	2.68
6) Living conditions	9	66	61	**117**	31	1	26	1.05	2.67
7) Physical health	5	42	54	**107**	77	0	16	1.07	2.27
8) Culture, custom, habits	3	28	57	**120**	75	2	11	0.97	2.18
9) Hobby, Pastime, Leisure	4	25	50	**110**	96	0	10	0.99	2.06

5 = Very difficult or stressful, 4 = Fairly difficult or stressful,

3 = Medium stress, 2 = Slightly stressful, 1= Very little stress.

Figure 8.1. Levels of stress in the nine stressful areas from the survey



8.5.2. Comparison of stress levels in three areas of experience

Part II of the questionnaire, shown in Appendix II, was again about students' stressful feelings. This part had three sections consisting of academic, language and socio-cultural areas, and each of these three areas included 16 items of potentially stressful events. These events were carefully chosen, having been found mainly through previous studies, or the preliminary research, to be most likely to occur in Japanese students' difficulties in the UK. Since the nature of the enquiry deals with human experience, it was not entirely possible to avoid some overlapping or inter-related items crossing over the categorical boundaries of the list. This set of questions about stress was highlighted by using a different coloured paper in the questionnaire booklet.

When comparing data from the two sets of questions (the questionnaire Part I – B and Part II) it was found that the overall ranking of difficulties or stress factors was

consistent. From the Part II data, it was also found that the severest difficulty experienced was in academic problems, followed by language difficulties, and then socio-cultural experiences, which were found to be the least stressful. Financial issues came third in both sets of answers. In Part II of the questionnaire respondents chose an answer from a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from very stressful (5) to very little stress (1), for each of the 16 events included in the three areas.

8.5.3. Stressful events experienced by Japanese students

This section deals with the result of the data analysis for 48 stress related questions in Part II of the questionnaire. The following table 8.4 shows the mean of the stress scores for each of the three areas of students' experiences.

Table 8.4. Mean of the stress scores in the three areas from the survey
(5-point scale, N=285)

3 areas of students' experiences	Mean
Academic difficulties (16 items)	2.89
Language difficulties (16 items)	2.82
Socio-cultural difficulties (16 items)	2.60

An analysis of the stress data shows the order of severity of stress for all 48 events from the three areas of experiences which were Academic (AC), English Language (EL) and Socio-Cultural (SC). The table of the complete stress data is shown below (Table 8.5) as well as in Appendix III.

(1) The most stressful experience was found to be dealing with coursework and examinations with about 4 out of every 5 respondents choosing fairly or extremely stressful (AC5, 79%) including 44% experiencing extreme stress.

(2) The second major experience of stress was the difficulty of speaking English in front of many people (EL3, 68%) and making a presentation in the classroom. (AC7, 66%) This was shared by over 2 out of every 3 respondents.

(3) The next most stressful experience applied to about 3 in 5 respondents who sometimes suffered significant stress when participating in group discussions (AC8, 62%, EL6, 58%) and in writing English. (EL1, 58%)

(4) Around a half of the respondents reported the two highest levels (extremely and fairly) of stress when trying to understand the course requirements (AC4, 48%), making a complaint or arguing in English (EL10, 48%) and trying to gain good assessments for their work. (AC6, 51%) About the same number found this degree of stress in paying the course fees (AC15, 51%) and had stressful anxiety about the future. (SC12, 48%) A similar number experienced stress in reading English (EL2, 46%) and in understanding viewpoints expressed by other students during classes. (EL5, 45%)

(5) About 2 in 5 students stated that trying to obtain admission caused them considerable stress (AC1, 44%) with similar results for the acquisition of new study skills in the UK (AC3, 42%), the achievement of satisfactory progress in their study (AC9, 40%) and the understanding of lectures and the taking of notes. (EL4, 39%) Adjusting to the new methods of teaching (AC2, 37%), quick speaking in English (EL12, 36%) and varieties of English (EL13, 37%) caused stress to about the same number as did finding good accommodation (SC2, 39%), talking on the telephone in English (EL9, 37%), dealing with financial problems (SC8, 44%) and other procedures in banks or other agencies. (SC7, 36%)

(6) About one third of all respondents experienced stress in adjusting to different ideas of sanitary habits (SC10, 33%) and to the theft or damage to their belongings. (SC11, 32%) A slightly lower number found difficulty with British weather (SC4, 28%) and gaining access to the necessary data and books for reference. (AC13, 28%)

(7) About one quarter of respondents had homesickness (SC6, 26%), had experienced racial discrimination (SC14, 24%) and social isolation or loneliness. (SC13, 23%) A similar number had stress caused by relationships with fellow students (AC10, 21%), too much use of Japanese (EL16, 25%) and the difficulty of daily conversations with friends. (EL7, 21%) Postal and other delivery services (SC16, 24%), the difficulty of obtaining proof reading (EL14, 24%) and necessary information about courses (AC14, 21%) also affected nearly a quarter of all respondents.

(8) Nearly 1 in 5 students found stress in other varied factors, such as relationships with teachers (AC11, 18%), maintaining good health (SC9, 18%), getting used to different food (SC3, 17%), the lack of opportunity to use Japanese (EL15, 16%) and gossiping among other Japanese students. (SC15, 16%)

(9) Only about 1 in 10 respondents found stress in making friends (SC1, 13%), lack of support from Japan (AC16, 14%), in daily communication outside the campus (EL11, 11%), in using libraries (AC12, 9%) and in reading newspapers and watching TV or movies. (EL8, 10%) The lowest level of stress was in meeting new people other than Japanese. (SC5, 6%) However some of these factors could still be a major cause of concern for some students and therefore should not be ignored.

The following table 8.5 (Data from the survey questionnaire Part II) shows the number of students choosing a particular stress level for 48 potentially stressful events in three areas of experiences (AC as academic, EL as English language and SC as socio-cultural). The right hand column shows the mean stress, and the column next to it (second from the right) shows the percentages of the sum of answers, by adding the two highest levels of stress (4 + 5), in relation to the total of 285.

Table 8.5. Levels of stress and mean values in stressful events experienced by respondents to the survey (N. = 285)

Stressful events	5	4	3	2	1	Other	Blank	% of 5+4	Mean stress
AC1-Obtaining admission	49	75	32	70	59	0	0	44	2.95
AC2-Different teaching style	19	86	41	91	48	0	0	37	2.78
AC3-Study skill	24	95	47	85	34	0	0	42	2.96
AC4-Course requirement	44	94	52	65	28	1	1	48	3.22
AC5-Exam and coursework	126	99	26	28	4	2	0	79	4.11
AC6-Good assessment	63	81	55	65	20	1	0	51	3.36
AC7-Oral presentation	96	91	36	46	14	2	0	66	3.74
AC8-Group discussion	83	94	42	43	21	2	0	62	3.62
AC9-Progress in study	33	80	70	76	25	0	1	40	3.07
AC10-Relationships with classmates	9	51	55	104	66	0	0	21	2.41
AC11-Teacher /student relationships	16	35	48	119	67	0	0	18	2.35
AC12-Library	1	24	23	74	163	0	0	9	1.69

AC13-Obtaining references	11	70	43	79	82	0	0	28	2.47
AC14-Information of class change	10	49	67	91	66	1	1	21	2.46
AC15-Paying tuition	60	86	46	43	50	0	0	51	3.22
AC16-Obtaining support from Japan	8	31	23	71	152	0	0	14	1.85
Mean of 16 academic stressors									2.89
EL1-Writing English	46	118	41	51	29	0	0	58	3.35
EL2-Reading English	35	96	50	69	34	1	0	46	3.11
EL3-Speaking English in front of people	92	103	31	41	18	0	0	68	3.74
EL4-Understanding lectures	40	71	65	69	39	0	1	39	3.01
EL5-Understanding other students	39	89	57	61	37	2	0	45	3.12
EL6-Participating in class discussion	71	94	43	55	20	1	1	58	3.50
EL7-Daily conversation with friends / teachers	11	50	50	90	83	1	1	21	2.35
EL8-Understanding Media (TV etc)	6	22	54	86	117	0	0	10	2.00
EL9-Telephones	34	72	49	69	61	0	0	37	2.82
EL10-Making claims in English	48	89	54	44	49	1	0	48	3.15
EL11-Shopping and public transport	3	28	40	102	111	1	0	11	1.98
EL12-Quick speaking in English	22	81	56	70	56	0	0	36	2.8
EL13-Dialects and non-UK English	25	80	56	73	51	0	0	37	2.84
EL14-Asking for editing of essays	21	47	73	73	66	0	5	24	2.59
EL15-Unable to use Japanese	13	33	60	80	99	0	0	16	2.23
EL16-Too much use of Japanese	22	48	62	58	88	0	7	25	2.49
Mean of 16 language stressors									2.82
SC1-Making friends with people	7	29	63	91	87	2	7	13	2.20
SC2-Good accommodation	39	73	52	63	50	0	8	39	2.96
SC3-Different foods	18	30	39	82	108	1	7	17	2.17
SC4-English weather	28	55	43	88	64	0	7	29	2.62
SC5-Meeting new people	4	13	42	93	124	1	8	6	1.85
SC6-Unable to see families and friends in Japan	24	50	47	90	66	1	7	26	2.55
SC7-Dealing with the police, hospital staff, and other public officials	34	86	51	57	44	2	11	42	3.03
SC8-Financial problems	57	69	59	47	46	0	7	44	3.16
SC9-Maintaining health	8	43	74	84	68	1	7	18	2.42
SC10-Different ideas of cleanliness	30	64	63	55	63	2	8	33	2.79
SC11-Damage to belongings or theft	21	70	74	56	52	1	11	32	2.83
SC12-Anxiety for the future	59	79	54	52	34	0	7	48	3.28
SC13-Feeling isolation	17	48	64	82	67	0	7	23	2.52

SC14-Racial discrimination	18	51	70	85	53	1	7	24	2.63
SC15-Gossiping among Japanese	16	31	53	70	107	0	8	16	2.20
SC16-Dealing with parcels / mail	23	44	50	70	91	0	7	24	2.42
Mean of 16 socio-cultural stressors									2.60

The list above is of value itself as an indicator of 285 respondents' stress perceptions. However, each stressful event must not be regarded as a simple, clear-cut single phenomenon. Statistical examination using mean comparisons and analysis of variance can show a slightly different pattern of responses, which will be considered in the following section.

8.6. Comparison of stress experienced by groups of respondents

This section gives a summary of the results of data analysis by comparing groups of respondents in relation to the mean scores of all 48 stressful events. It has provided an answer to the fifth subsidiary research question, mentioned in Chapter 1.4, which was 'how do stress factors vary among groups of respondents?' The groups are divided by age, gender, course level, level of English, field of study, past experience of overseas travel, past job experience, and participation in a pre-sessional course.

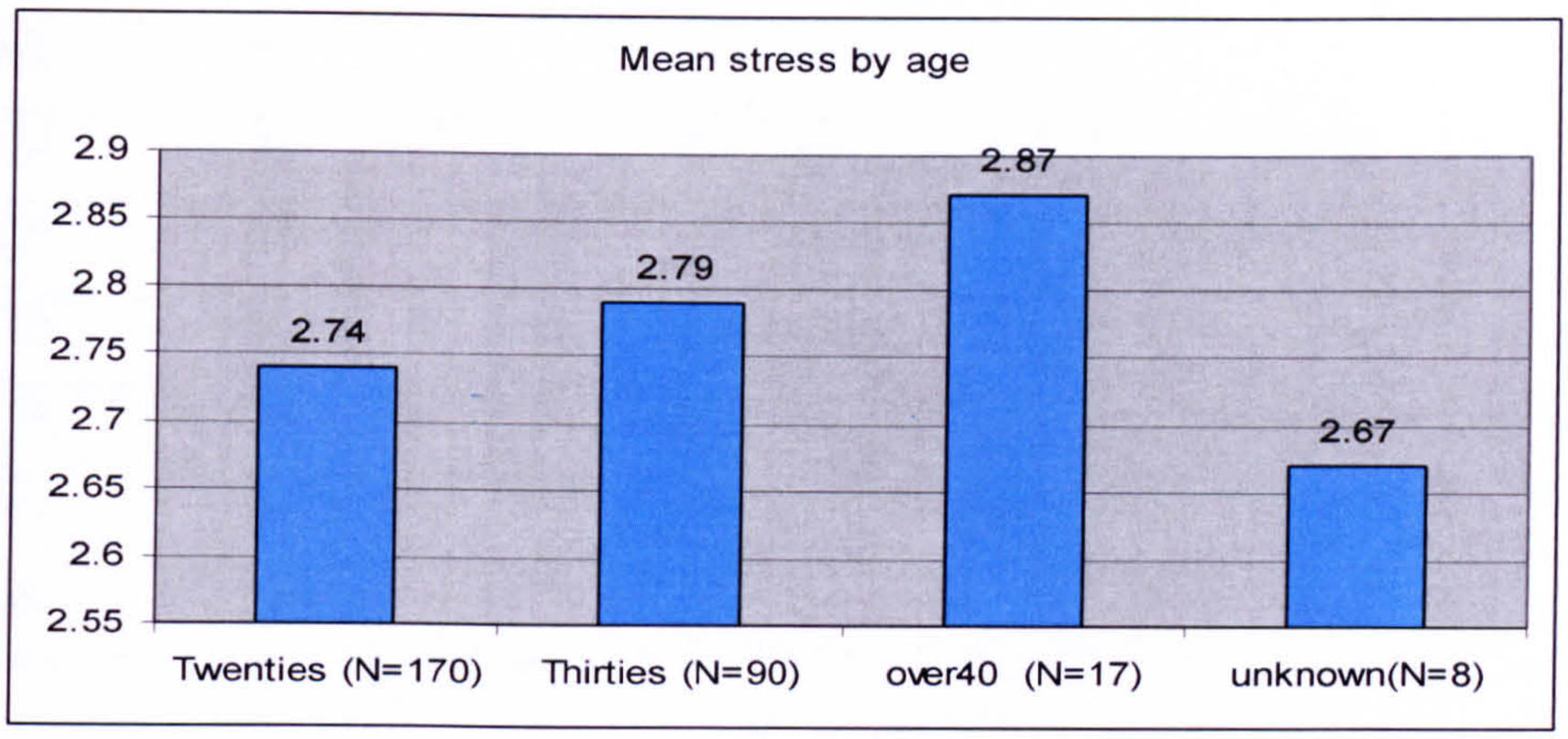
8.6.1. Age

It was found that the older the age group, the greater the mean stress level, although the overall differences between the twenties and thirties is too small to be statistically significant. Respondents in the twenties scored 2.74, those in the thirties 2.79 and those over forty 2.87 as shown in the table (8.6) and figure (8.2) below.

Table 8.6. Mean stress levels of respondents to the survey compared by age groups

Age band	N=	Mean stress
Twenties (total)	170	2.74
Thirties (total)	90	2.79
Over 40	17	2.87
Age unknown	8	2.67
Total	285	2.77

Figure 8.2. Mean stress levels of respondents to the survey compared by age groups



Further statistical analysis shows that five events were significantly more stressful to the older Japanese students and two events were significantly more stressful to the younger Japanese students who were in their twenties. This is shown in the following table. (8.7)

Table 8.7. Findings of significant mean differences of stress levels by age groups. Using analysis of variance (ANOVA, SPSS)

Events in which students in the 20 age band have less stressful feelings than those in the 30 and 40 age bands. (* =p<.05)	1) AC2-Adjusting to new methods of teaching (20s <40s)* 2) AC3-Acquiring new study skills (20s < 40s, 30s < 40s)* 3) AC6-Gaining good assessments (20s < 30s)* 4) AC11-Relationships with teachers (20s < 40s, 30s <40s)* 5) SC2-Finding good accommodation (20s < 30s)*
Events in which students in the 20 age band have more stressful feelings than those in the 30 age band.	1) AC13-Gaining access to necessary data and books for reference (20s > 30s)* 2) SC15-Gossiping among Japanese (20s > 30s)*

Mean stress for the different age goups in relation to the academic, language and socio-cultural areas of stress problems is shown in the following table. (8.8)

Table 8.8. Mean stress levels of respondents to the survey compared by age in the three main areas of experience.

Age group	Number	AC stress Mean	EL stress Mean	SC stress Mean	Mean stress level in 3 areas
blank	8	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.7
19-24	85	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.8
25-29	85	2.8	2.6	2.5	2.6
30-39	90	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.8
40-49	11	3.2	3.1	2.6	3.0
50 +	6	3.1	2.8	2.1	2.7
Total	285	2.9	2.8	2.6	2.8

On the whole it seems that there is no simple correlation between mean stress levels and the age of students. The 25-29 age group had the lowest overall level of stress and the 40-49 age group the highest level. The 50 + age group had a much lower mean stress level for socio-cultural problems which may have been due to their increased maturity, or possibly to the benefit of experiences from their past careers.

8.6.2. Gender

It was found that gender did not make any significant difference to the overall mean stress scores. The average male stress perception was 2.79 (n=82) and the female 2.78. (n=201) However a more detailed analysis of mean comparisons for these two groups revealed that there were significant differences in 6 events as shown in the table below.

Table 8.9. Findings of significant mean differences of stress levels of survey respondents compared by gender groups. Using analysis of variance. (ANOVA, SPSS)

Stress level experienced by females greater than by males	AC9-Making progress in study (F=8.189, p<.005) SC9-Maintaining health (F=7.421, p<.007) SC10-Different ideas of sanitary habits (F=4.494, p<.035)
Stress level experienced by males greater than by females	EL4-Understanding lectures and taking notes (F=5.092, p<.025) EL12- Quick speaking in English (F=5.947, p<.015) SC3-Getting used to new/different food (F=5.633, p<.018)

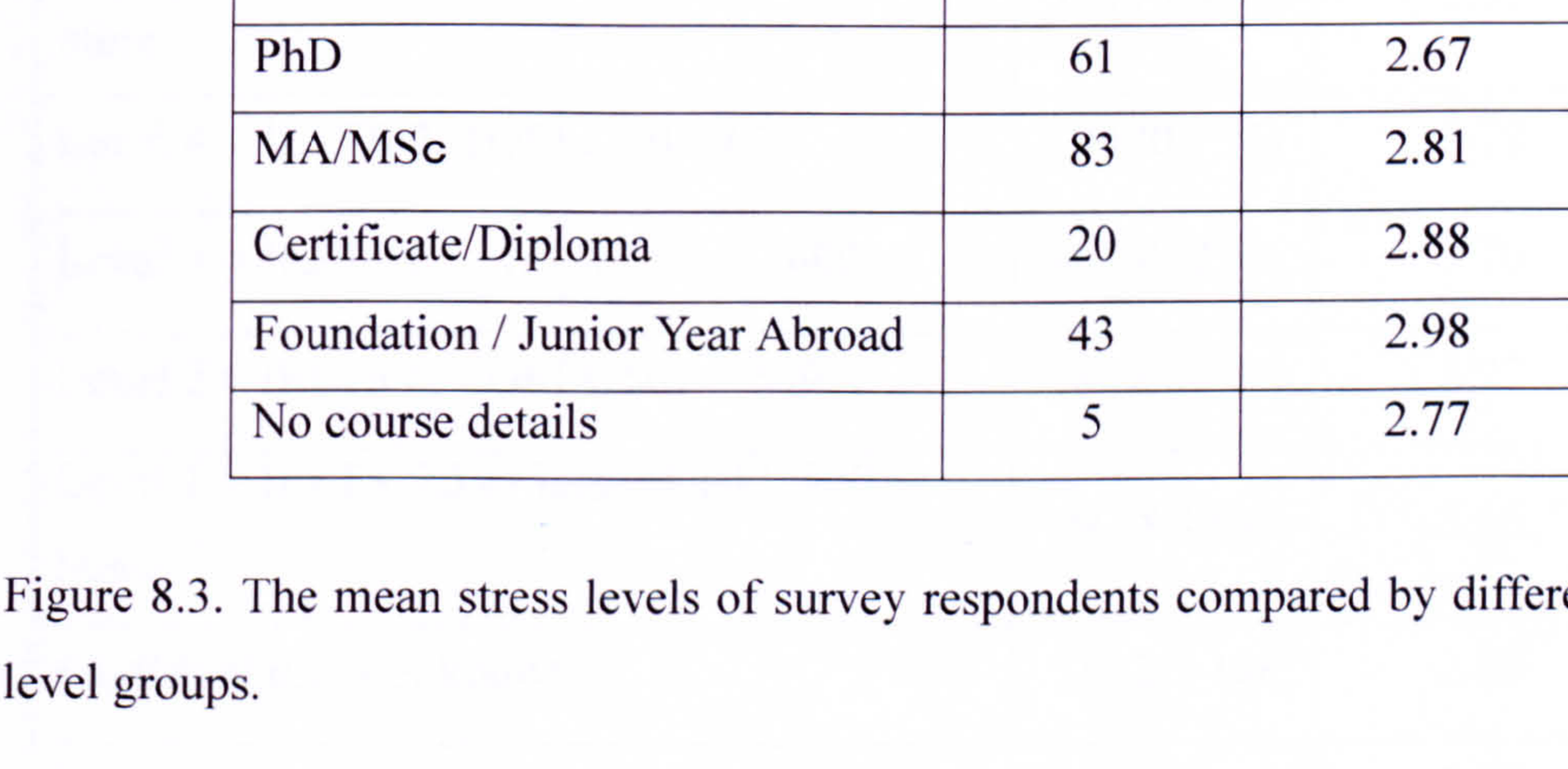
8.6.3. Course level

The total 285 respondents were divided into 5 groups according to the level of their courses: (1) BA, BSc, BTec, LLB, (2) PhD, (3) MA/MSc, (4) Certificate/Diploma, and (5) Foundation courses. Of these the first two degree course groups, (BA or PhD), showed a lower level of stress. This may be explained by the fact that these two groups of students usually had a longer period of stay (over 3 years) whilst the courses in which respondents had higher stress scores such as MA, Diploma, or Foundation, usually had a shorter period of stay, mostly one year. The following table (8.10) and figure(8.2) show the mean stress by different course groups.

Table 8.10. The mean stress levels of survey respondents compared by different course level groups.

Course levels	N =	Mean stress
BA, BSc, BTec, LLB	73	2.66
PhD	61	2.67
MA/MSc	83	2.81
Certificate/Diploma	20	2.88
Foundation / Junior Year Abroad	43	2.98
No course details	5	2.77

Figure 8.3. The mean stress levels of survey respondents compared by different course level groups.



8.6.4. Level of English ability

As shown in Table 8.11 below, 13.3 % of the students with the highest English ability level, an IELTS score of 7.5 or more, had the lowest stress level overall. The 8.4 % with a score of 5.5 or less had the highest stress level, whilst the 74.8 % with an IELTS score from 6 – 7 all had about the same average intermediate stress level so that the English level of ability seems to have little effect on overall perceptions of stress by these students. However, those with IELTS score of 5.5 or less experience more overall stress and those with IELTS score of 7.5 or more experience less overall stress.

Table 8.11. The mean stress levels of survey respondents compared by level of English ability (N=285)

English ability level	N (% of the total)	Mean stress
Level 5 = IELTS 7.5 or more, TOEFL 631 or more	38 (13.3 %)	2.51
Level 4 = IELTS 7, TOEFL 601~630	59 (20.7 %)	2.78
Level 3 = IELTS 6.5, TOEFL 551 ~ 600	86 (30.2 %)	2.76
Level 2 = IELTS 6, TOEFL 501 ~ 549	68 (23.9 %)	2.77
Level 1 = IELTS 5.5 or less, TOEFL 500 or less	24 (8.4 %)	3.16
English ability not known	10 (3.5 %)	2.98
Overall average	285	2.77

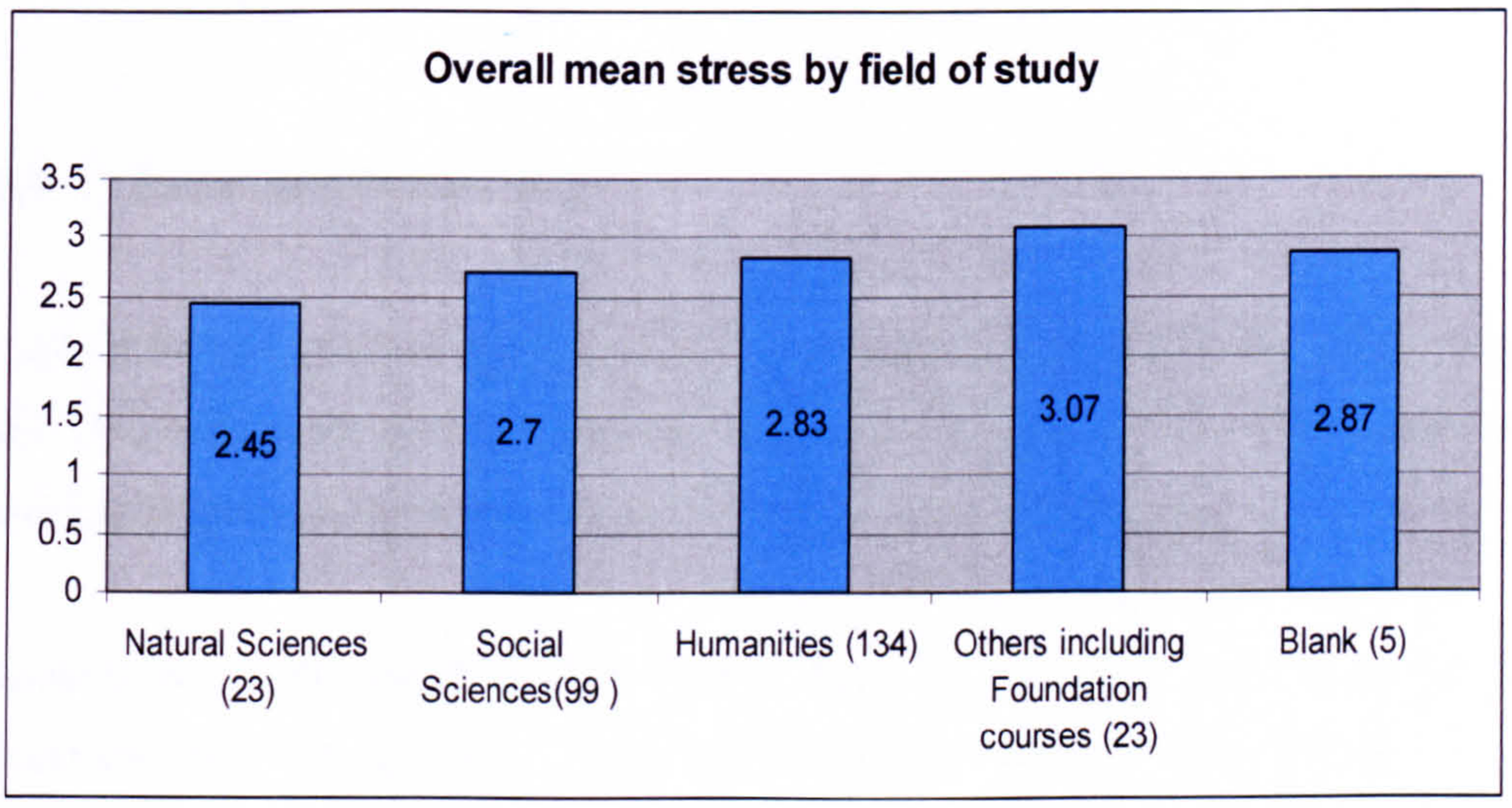
8.6.5. Fields of study

Table 8.12 below, followed by figure 8.4, shows that respondents studying Natural Sciences had the lowest mean stress, which may be partly because of less dependency on language ability in their disciplines. This was followed by Social Sciences and Humanities students. The average English level, shown by IELTS score, of respondents studying Natural Sciences is slightly lower than in the other two fields. (Social Sciences and Humanities)

Table 8.12. The overall mean stress levels of survey respondents compared by different study field groups

Fields of study (Number)	Age average	Male/Female ratio (%)	Overall mean stress
Natural Sciences (23)	27.87	12 / 11 (52/48 %)	2.45
Social Sciences(99)	28.02	32 / 67 (32/68 %)	2.70
Humanities (134)	31.09	27 / 106 (20/79 %)	2.83
Others including Foundation courses (23)	22.35	10 / 13 (43/57 %)	3.07
Blank (5)		1 / 4 (20/80 %)	2.87

Figure 8.4. The overall mean stress levels of survey respondents compared by different study field groups



8.6.6. Past experience of overseas study

The difference of mean stress scores between respondents who had previous experience of overseas study and those who did not was 0.2 as shown in the Table 8.13 below. This also shows that, with one exception, the mean stress level falls as the length of past overseas study increases. The exception was for the 1 – 2 years overseas study group which was about 0.1 higher than expected in its mean stress level. This may be partly explained by the fact that this group also had the highest average age.

Table 8.13. The mean stress levels of survey respondents compared by length of past experience of overseas study

Length		N (Total =285)	Overall mean stress	English level mean	Average age
Zero or first timers		114	2.89	3.25	28.55
More than one experience of overseas study		170	2.69	3.28	29.21
Length of past over-seas study	Only weeks	41	2.77	2.93	27.05
	Only months	45	2.72	3.11	29.55
	1-2 years	34	2.80	3.38	30.65
	2-3 Years	24	2.66	3.41	30.09
	4-5 years	18	2.47	3.59	29.82
	Over 6 years	8	2.24	4.63	29.00
	Not known	1	3.39	4	22

8.6.7. Previous job experience

Table 8.14 below shows that those who had previous job experience, before studying in the UK, had more stressful feelings in three experiences than those who had never worked before and experienced less stress in just one experience.

Table 8.14. Significant mean difference of survey respondents' mean stress levels compared by job experience. (One-way analysis of variance using SPSS)

Job experience > Not worked	1) AC11-Relationships with teachers (F=5.871, p=.016) 2) EL1-Writing English (F=4.149, p=.043) 3) SC2-Finding good accommodation (F=4.888, p=.028)
Not worked > Job experience	SC15-Gossiping among Japanese (F=8.969, p=.003)

8.6.8. Pre-sessional course experience

Respondents who attended pre-sessional courses had 2.88 as their overall average stress score, whereas those who did not had 2.68. The average English ability level of pre-sessional course respondents was 3.04, just slightly lower than the average of 3.08 gained by those who had not taken a pre-sessional course. Although respondents who had taken pre-sessional courses had a slightly older age (29.7), compared with the rest (28.3), a possible reason for this higher stress was that many of this group may have been required or encouraged to take pre-sessional courses because of their slightly poorer ability. The table 8.15 below shows these results and the table 8.16 shows 8 stressful events that were found to be significantly different between these two groups.

Table 8.15. Mean stress levels of survey respondents compared by whether a pre-sessional course was taken or not .

	Age (Av.)	Gender	N=	English level Mean	Mean Stress of 3 areas	Course group (N=285)
Those who did not take a pre-sessional course	28.28	F(65%) M(34%) Not known	98 51 1	3.08	2.68	35 PhD(23%) 31 MA,MSc(21%) 37 BA,BSc(25%) 9 Cert. & Dipl.(6%) 35 Foundation.(23%) 3 Not known 150 Total
Those who took a pre-sessional course	29.71	F(76%) M(23%) Not known	102 31 1	3.04	2.88	26 PhD(19%) 52 MA, MSc(39%) 35 BA, BSc(26%) 11 Cert. & Dipl.(8%) 8 Foundation(6%) 2 Not known 134 Total
Not known	26	F	1	4	2.92	1 BA

Table. 8.16. Significant differences of mean stress levels of survey respondents compared by whether a pre-sessional course was taken or not (One-way analysis of variance by using SPSS)

Events in which those who took a pre-sessional course had more stressful feelings than those who did not.	1) AC1-Obtaining admission (F=5.945, p<.015*) 2) AC8-Participating in group discussions (F=5.182, p<.024*) 3) EL1-Writing English (F=10.311 p<.001*) 4) EL6-Participating in group discussions by asking questions or explaining opinions (F=9.680 p<.002*) 5) SC4-Getting used to UK weather (F=6.666, p<.010*) 6) SC7-Taking procedures in a bank, police station, hospital or council offices (F=4.165, p<.042*) 7) SC9-Maintaining health (F=5.945, p<.019*) 8) SC15-Gossiping among Japanese (F=4.344, p<.024*)

This list suggests that those who took a pre-sessional course might be more anxious than those who did not take the course.

8.7. Self evaluation and observation by respondents

Answers, of either most or fairly applicable, to a series of statements are given in Tables 8.17 to 8.19 below. These revealed that 92% of respondents felt that their overseas study experience was worthwhile, 91% were happy about their overseas study experience in general, 88% that their English language had improved greatly or reasonably well, 80% that their academic skill had improved and that they had gained a lot of new knowledge, 66% that their cross-cultural adaptation ability had increased, 66% that they had become more able to challenge difficulties and 63% that their awareness of the Japanese identity had been strengthened. A slightly lower percentage (50%) believed that they could make friends more easily now, 49% that they felt less stressful because of their improvement in English language, 39% that they had become more confident in their own ideas and 25% that they had become more cheerful and outgoing. 62% felt their effort was not enough, 47% were anxious about their future, 42% were often frustrated, 34% often felt exhausted, 22% felt quite nervous every day, 16% felt very lonely and 7% reported that they often became ill. 39 % had a preference for co-national friends

closely followed by friends from other nationalities (38%) with British host-national friends in third place. (23 %)

It must be remembered when considering these surprisingly high percentages of anxiety and stress that in Japan one is encouraged not to speak too highly of oneself but to acknowledge shortcomings and weaknesses. Whilst the UK has a more competitive society, in Japan it is much more a conformist society. Most students in Japan do not want to claim any superiority over their fellow students. It must also be noted that students were allowed to choose 'neither yes nor no' in response to these questions and that, on average, 23% chose this option as their reply. This may imply, in some cases, that it was too early for them to choose a reply.

Only two of the 285 respondents felt that they had made no improvement at all in their English language ability. They were both female, in their mid-thirties, on post-graduate courses in Applied Linguistics. They both had quite good English levels on arriving in the UK, and their worries evidently centered more on the academic demands of their study.

Less than 1% felt that their overseas study was not at all worthwhile, 1% that they had made no improvement in challenging difficulties, or making friends more easily and only 2% reported no improvement in their ability to adapt to cross-cultural challenges or feeling less stressful through improvement in their English language ability. It was perhaps surprising that only 31% were not anxious about their future whilst 47% were either fairly or most anxious. Of course most of them were at a turning point in their lives on their return to Japan.

The following Tables from 8.17 to 8.19 together with Figure 8.5, which shows the estimate by survey respondents of their improvement in English language, show the full details of these data.

Table 8.17. Self observation by survey respondents on their experiences in the UK (Highest result in each item is shown in bold style.)

Self observation	5 = Most applicable	4 = Fairly applicable	3 = Neither yes nor no	2 = Not so applicable	1 = Not at all applicable	Mean (S.D.)
(a) I am happy about my overseas study in general.	**191 (67.0%)**	68 (23.9%)	22 (7.7%)	4 (1.4%)	0	4.56 (0.7)
(b) I feel quite nervous every day.	13 (4.6%)	52 (18.2%)	72 (25.3%)	**98 (34.4%)**	50 (17.5%)	2.58 (1.11)
(c) My overseas study experience is worthwhile.	**173 (60.7%)**	88 (30.9%)	17 (6.0%)	5 (1.8%)	2 (0.7%)	4.49 (0.75)
(d) My effort is not enough.	74 (26.0%)	**104 (36.5%)**	61 (21.4%)	38 (13.3%)	8 (2.8%)	3.69 (1.08)
(e) I am exhausted.	30 (10.5%)	67 (23.5%)	76 (26.7)	**83 (29.1%)**	29 (10.2%)	2.95 (1.17)
(f) I often become ill.	5 (1.8%)	14 (4.9%)	40 (14.0%)	81 (28.4%)	**145 (50.9%)**	1.78 (0.98)
(g) I feel very lonely.	10 (3.5%)	37 (13.0%)	70 (24.6%)	77 (27.0%)	**91 (31.9%)**	2.29 (1.15)
(h) I often feel frustrated.	24 (8.4%)	**96 (33.7%)**	58 (20.4%)	62 (21.8%)	44 (15.4%)	2.98 (1.23)
(i) I am anxious about my future.	44 (15.4%)	**89 (31.3%)**	63 (22.1%)	49 (17.2%)	40 (14.0%)	3.17 (1.28)

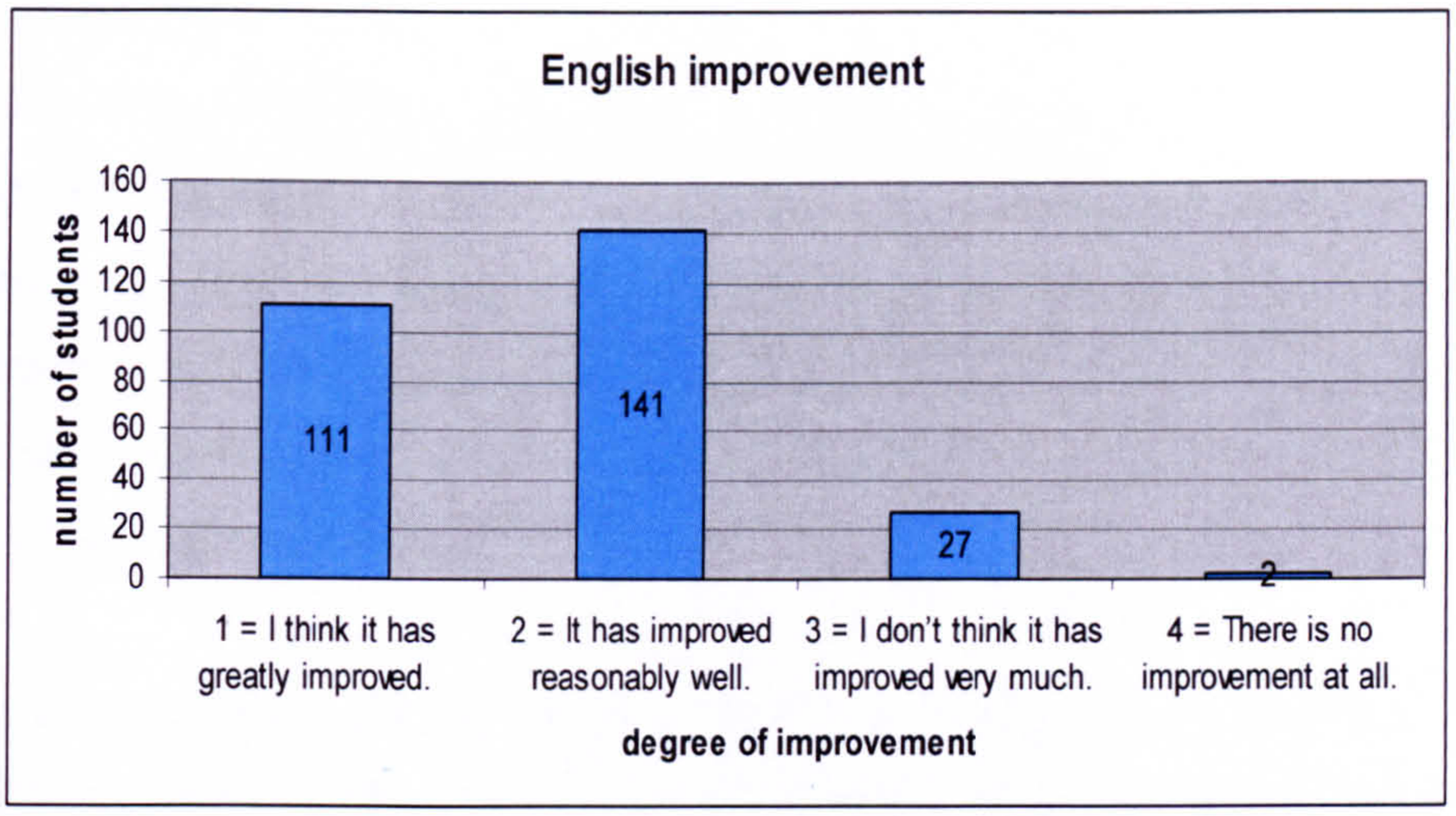
Table 8.18. Self evaluation by survey respondents of any change or improvement after their study in the UK. (Higher result in each item is shown in bold style.)

Difference and growth while studying in the UK?	5 = Most applicable	4 = Fairly applicable	3 = Unable to say	2 = Not so appli-cable	1 = Not at all applicable	N/A	Mean (S.D.)
(a) I have become more able to challenge difficulties.	79 (27.7%)	**108 (37.9%)**	73 (25.6%)	20 (7.0%)	4 (1.4%)	1 (0.4)	3.84 (0.96)
(b) My academic skill has improved and I have gained a lot of new knowledge.	101 (35.4%)	**128 (44.9%)**	39 (13.7%)	16 (5.6%)	0	1 (0.4)	4.11 (0.84)
(c) I can make friends with people more easily now.	41 (14.4%)	101 (35.4%)	**104 (36.5%)**	34 (11.9%)	4 (1.4%)	1 (0.4%)	3.50 (0.93)
(d) Along with my English improvement I feel less stressful.	47 (16.5%)	92 (32.3%)	**94 (33.0%)**	43 (15.1%)	7 (2.5%)	2 (0.7)	3.46 (1.02)
(e) My cross-cultural adaptation ability has increased.	73 (25.6%)	**115 (40.4%)**	62 (21.8%)	28 (9.8%)	6 (2.1%)	1 (0.4%)	3.78 (1.01)
(f) My personality has become more cheerful and outgoing.	22 (7.7%)	49 (17.2%)	**119 (41.8%)**	62 (21.8%)	32 (11.2%)	1 (0.4)	2.88 (1.07)
(g) I have become more confident in my own ideas.	33 (11.6%)	79 (27.7%)	**112 (39.3%)**	45 (15.8%)	14 (4.9%)	2 (0.7)	3.25 (1.02)
(h) My awareness of my Japanese identity has been strengthened.	**97 (34.0%)**	83 (29.1%)	54 (18.9%)	31 (10.9%)	16 (5.6%)	5 (1.4)	3.76 (1.20)

Table 8.19. Degree of satisfaction of survey respondents with their study in the UK

degree of satisfaction	5 =Greatest satisfaction	4 =Some satisfaction	3 =Unable to say	2 =Not much satisfaction	1=No satisfaction at all	N/A (%)	Mean (S.D)
	102 (35.8%)	**128 (44.9%)**	46 (16.1%)	5 (1.8%)	2 (0.7%)	2 (0.7)	4.15 (0.8)

Figure 8.5. Survey respondents' estimate of their improvement in English language.



1 = I think it has greatly improved. (38.9%)

2 = It has improved reasonably well. (49.5%)

3 = I do not think it has improved very much. (9.5%)

4 = There is no improvement at all. (0.7%)

8.8. Conclusion

This chapter provided an analysis of much of the data obtained from the main questionnaire. It has given an account of how 285 Japanese students perceived their stressful moments in the UK. It has also looked at how stress factors vary among groups of respondents. The respondents' answers about their coping strategies will be considered in Chapter 9 and their advice to future Japanese students and to UKHE institutions in Chapter 10.

Three areas of students' experiences (language, academic, and socio-cultural) have been investigated and compared in detail. Two different sets of questions in the main questionnaire both identified that Japanese students feel academic difficulties as the severest stress, followed by language difficulties and then financial stress problems. This was not exactly the same as the result obtained from the preliminary study, which suggested that language problems were the severest. However, since language difficulties can often lead to academic stress, too much emphasis should probably not be placed on this difference. The different results clearly show that language problems are inter-connected with academic and socio-cultural problems. This will be further considered in Chapters 11 and 12.

Factors such as age, level of study and gender had very little effect on students' overall perceptions of stress. Ability in English language only had an overall effect on stress perception for the minority of students with either very high or very low test scores. One of the most unexpected results of the mean stress was that those students who took pre-sessional courses had higher stress mean level than those who did not. This invited some consideration about the detailed profile difference of the two groups. The comparison of mean stress levels between groups of respondents will be discussed in Chapter 12 in more details.

Stress is a time-related phenomenon. Students at the time of coursework deadlines obviously experience a great deal of stress. The main survey was carried out with little reference to any time factors. In the second phase of the investigation this point is reconsidered and students' stress is examined within a chronological perspective. This is described in Chapter 11 where, in addition to time graph representations of students' perceptions of stress, there are in-depth comments from the students about the intensity of their stressful feelings, with details about the exact cause of each stress episode.

Chapter Nine. The Coping Strategies for Stress Used by Japanese Students in the UK

9.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the coping strategies used for dealing with stress experienced by Japanese students in UKHEIs. These are examined in relation to the students' stress factors previously identified. In fact, stress cannot be fully understood without also considering coping strategies, as Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have pointed out : 'It is the observed stimulus-response relationship, not the stimulus or the response, that defines stress' (p.15). First (9.2), there is a discussion of strategies, obtained from the survey data, which students used when dealing with academic, language or socio-cultural difficulties and problems. Then (9.3) there is an examination, in more detail, of students' self evaluation of their coping strategies.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the term 'coping strategy' can often be used synonymously with 'adaptation to an environment'. There are, of course, many psychological as well as biological studies on human adaptation in relation to the environment. However, in this study, it is appropriate to use the term 'coping' to also describe the more purposeful response of students who try, not only to adapt themselves to the UKHEI environment, but also to learn, improve and achieve, which involves a more dynamic and productive state of mind. (See 4.6 and 4.7)

9.2. Coping strategies - results from the survey

9.2.1. Overview

In the questionnaire Japanese students were given 6 options from which to choose their coping strategies. They were:

1. To challenge myself, persist, try harder and keep making efforts (*Gambaru* in one Japanese word).
2. To compromise, postpone or dodge
3. To escape, ignore, try to forget or give up
4. To consult or ask for help
5. To try to cope in other ways (e.g. drink alcohol, go shopping or sleep)

6. To think that there is no problem in this matter.

The respondents were asked to choose, from this list, the coping options used by them in each area of 9 possible stressful categories, provided in the questionnaire, which are shown below (Table 9.1). More than one answer was accepted since one often adopts more than one coping strategy when facing a problem. Full details of answers are shown in Appendix III, and the following table is a simplified version, showing only the percentages choosing one or two of the six coping options. Since these were based on 285 respondents, with double answers included, the total for all strategies may be more than 100%.

Table 9.1. Coping strategy of survey respondents for each area of difficulty
The asterisk indicates the highest percentage in each row (problem area) and the highest percentage in each column (coping strategy) is underlined.

Problem areas \ Coping strategies	1.Challenge myself, persist, try harder, keep making efforts	2.Compromise, postpone, dodge	3.Escape, ignore, try to forget, give up	4.Consult someone or ask for help	5. Try to cope in other ways (e.g. drink alcohol, go	6. To think that there is no problem in this matter.
1. English language difficulties	79.3*	8.0	3.5	4.6	2.1	4.6
2. Academic difficulties	82.1*	3.9	1.8	11.9	2.8	2.5
3. Living conditions (clothes, food, housing etc.)	20.7	26.0	8.4	14.7	4.2	28.4*
4. Human relationships (teachers, classmates and others)	16.5	14.7	14.0	38.2*	4.9	17.9
5. Leisure and hobby activities.	11.9	10.5	5.6	5.6	5.6	60.0*
6. Culture, custom and habits	9.8	18.2	10.9	14.4	4.6	42.5*
7. Financial conditions	29.5*	9.1	4.2	23.9	6.3	28.1
8. Physical health conditions	16.8	3.2	2.5	26.0	14.0	37.2*
9. Psychological health conditions	17.5	3.5	5.6	43.9*	19.6	14.0

This table provides evidence that Japanese students in UKHEIs generally have a very positive and productive attitude towards their study difficulties and challenges. They

work hard to overcome any difficulties in learning English and to fulfill their own academic requirements. They have few problems in hobbies and leisure time, and rarely take negative or evasive action to cope with their problems. The main exception, but for a minority, is in coping with health problems where, for example, sleep might sometimes be the best solution. However, a closer look at the details of all coping strategies reveals many determined and complicated efforts that students often undertook. The following sections discuss details of these coping actions in each of the 3 major stress areas, including some descriptions of coping strategies recorded by students. All statements by respondents quoted here were translated into English by the researcher and students' statements are shown in italics in order to emphasise their verbatim 'voices' in this chapter.

9.2.2. Coping strategies for English language difficulties

When Japanese students found problems with the English language, they mainly said that they had no other choice but to keep working on them. English language learning is, of course, one of the biggest concerns, almost a national issue, of the Japanese people. In students' replies about their motivation for studying abroad, it was discovered that the desire to study English was the main motivation for their decision to study at UKHEIs, with almost 80 % choosing a reply of 'definitely' or 'probably' for this option. (Table 8.2)

Living in the UK, of course, provides foreign students with a 24 hours a day chance for language learning. Listening to any English they hear, whether from TV, teachers, friends, the travellers on public transport, shopkeepers or reading a newspaper, involves an opportunity for language learning. This is sometimes a matter of necessity for survival, as they constantly need awareness of the new language. It is, in a sense, a process of learning a language by immersion and, in most cases, awareness itself can be understood as a very positive effort springing from a coping and learning attitude. Examples of other strategies identified were to '*always carry a dictionary*', '*read a grammar book for extra-curricular study*', '*encourage myself to go into the crowd and keep listening to people*', and '*seek to join in as many opportunities of English conversation as possible.*'

One respondent wrote:

When the speed of conversation is too fast, and I cannot grasp what is going on, I feel lonely. However I somehow try to find a way of enjoying such a situation. If I am enjoying myself, this will attract others to start talking to me. If I am depressed it will also affect others badly. Since the climate and weather here are very unstable, it often tends to make us feel quite grim. So it is better to think that the feeling of depression is more likely to have been caused by the weather! (KH15)

Another respondent wrote:

No matter how difficult English is, no matter how hard lessons in English are, there is no other option but to think that I am here to study my favourite subject, which I knew would be very hard before the course started. So I convince myself to think that the only solution is to look forward. There is no life without any stress. Despite hardships, life can be enjoyable. I even feel that this is a much more productive struggle than the hardship I had in Japan as a company worker. (AT16)

The following box shows briefly some other coping strategies adopted when students encountered English language problems/difficulties. These statements were all given in a reply to an open question in the main questionnaire.

There is no other option but to learn it for myself. / To believe that my English will eventually be improved. / Do my best. / When good results are given, I give credit to myself. / I ask others occasionally. / English language is very basic for my study, so what else should I try for. / Consult a teacher. / Let myself run along with the flow. / Somehow try whatever I can, believing that the course of time will bring me a solution. / I try not to be frustrated but try to improve little by little. / I try to expand my vocabulary starting from areas in which I am interested or those that I can enjoy.

It should be noted that very few negative or evasive strategies were recorded by the survey respondents when they encountered language problems even while acknowledging the severity of their stressful feelings. Whether or not this is common to students of other nationalities is beyond the scope of this investigation. However it is possible to conclude that, in general, Japanese students are highly motivated English

language learners and are noteworthy in their own constant efforts to improve their English. What tends to be forgotten by native speakers of English is that, from the learner's point of view, English language difficulties are very often demanding ones for learners and consequently require constant efforts to cope with them.

9.2.3. Coping strategies for academic difficulties

The survey result showed that academic problems and difficulties were tackled by the respondents even more positively than language problems. As was shown in Table 9.1 above, more than eight in ten respondents chose option 1, the most hard-working and confronting strategy, for coping (challenge myself, persist, try harder, keep making efforts). More than one in ten chose 'consult someone' (option 4), which was the second highest option, whilst for language problems 'compromising strategy' (option 2) was the second highest answer (8%) and 'consult someone' was chosen by less than one in twenty of the respondents. This difference suggests that English language learning is regarded as a much more lonely and individual process. 34 % of respondents sometimes consulted a teacher or personal/course tutor about problems in academic work and 21 % a fellow Japanese student. In English language problems, 26 % consulted an English friend, 21 % a Japanese friend and 20 % a teacher or course tutor. (Appendix III. (7))

Here are some statements by respondents on coping with academic difficulties:

I realized the importance of time management. (12)
Of course it is stressful for a student to study. So when I feel myself stressed, I try to work on week-days and rest at weekends, thus putting rhythm into my life. (49)
In coping with my study it is depressing if I try to think too much, so having a break and getting used to the situation are both necessary and important. (64)
Studying in a foreign country is harder than studying in Japan. What is important is to have a very clear goal before coming to the UK. (69)
When facing a difficulty, I ask myself: 'Then do I want to return to Japan?' In this way I can refresh my challenging spirit. (227)

A summary of other coping strategies given in reply to an open-ended question about academic problems is given below:

Eat. / I am doing this because I like to do it. For essay writing, I get help from my English girlfriend. / Refresh myself by doing sports. / Walk. / Play the piano. / Consult someone. / Refresh myself by hobbies or strolls. / Change the mood. / No one forced me to do this. Since I started this with my own will, I give my best effort until I get full understanding. / I consult about lesson topics with my friends. / Watch a film.

This shows that many methods of coping with academic problems were similar to those used with language learning difficulties mainly by positively challenging the problems and trying harder.

One often hears a critical comment about Japanese students, in UK classrooms, that they are silent and unresponsive. However, when asked about advice to future students, a high percentage of respondents chose to recommend 'speaking out in the classroom.' When asked in the question D1 (5) 'Should I speak out in the classroom even though I make lots of mistakes?' nine out of ten respondents gave one of two positive answers, 'definitely' or 'probably' Yes. One explanation of this gap between intention and achievement is that students are, in the learning process of the UK academic situation, trying to adapt themselves to 'do in Rome as Romans do', which reinforces a recognition that there is a gap between what they can do and what they think they should do and are trying to do. Japanese students often have a real problem in adapting to class discussions, in the typical UK classroom, because this is not often required of them in Japan.

9.2.4. Coping strategies for socio-cultural difficulties

This section is about coping strategies for several socio-cultural problems. These problems are shown in Table 9.1 as items 3 to 9.

a. Living conditions (clothes, food, housing etc.)

b. Human relationships (teachers, classmates and others)

c. Leisure and hobby activities.

d. Culture, customs and habits

e. Financial problems

f. Physical health conditions

g. Psychological conditions (e.g. anxiety)

Four out of the seven problem areas, underlined above, had their highest percentage choice for 'having no problems' although only one, leisure and hobby activities, had a majority of students giving this negative response. (60%, Table 9.1) When it came to living conditions only 28% reported having no problems. The highest coping strategy for dealing with financial problems was by a positive and assertive attitude. (29.5%) This was closely followed by 'no problem', and then 'consult someone'. Two areas of potential problems, human relationships and psychological conditions, were dealt with by a strategy of 'consulting others' as the highest option score adopted by about four out of every ten respondents.

(a) Living conditions (clothes, food, housing etc.)

Students' assessment of their accommodation showed that 75.8% were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied.' One respondent wrote this:

When I was moving into a flat, I could not help but compromise. I tried to think positively, focusing on the good points of the flat, which was in a convenient location for public transport, even though I found the flat was unsatisfactory for me after agreeing to the contract. (272)

Another student, on a PhD course (214), reported that she tried to minimise her shopping time, avoiding rush hours, so that the time for bus transport would be reduced. In relation to a food problem, one male respondent wrote:

As I live in a hall of residence, I cannot cook. So I visit a friend of mine, who lives in a house with a kitchen, and ask for her permission to cook there. (208)

However, many of those who had a clear coping strategy for food problems did not regard them as being particularly stressful. The student quoted above, for example, marked the stress score for food problem as 1 (the least stressful out of 5 scale options). It is possible, of course, to argue that his practical solution took away the stress. As was pointed out in Chapter 8, finding suitable food was a significantly more severe problem for male students than for female students. A summary of other coping strategies for

living conditions is given below.

Try to manage. / Try to get used to things. / There is no other choice but to somehow manage. / Consult someone. / Compromise / Give up. / The minimum comfort is fine. / I take high-calorie food at a campus cafeteria and eat vegetables only at home. / Try to enjoy. / Self catering. / Go out with friends. / Long telephone calls. / Consult a close friend.

In general those who do not adopt a clear coping strategy tend to regard the issue as more stressful.

(b) Human relationships (teachers, classmates and others)

Coping strategies for human relationships problems were rather varied. The questionnaire revealed that each of 3 types of coping strategies which represent 3 quite different levels of response (Challenge, Compromise, and Give up) resulted in similar scores. (around 15%) A further enquiry about what kind of human relationship problems they had in mind for each coping option would have been helpful to give a clearer picture. The highest score option for coping with difficulties in human relationships was 'to consult someone'. (Option 4)

This is the statement written by one respondent:

It is difficult to make English friends, but I was able to make friends with my host family. As a result my friends' ages varied widely from the thirties to sixties. I have seen a young Japanese student in her twenties having real difficulty in making friends with people of a similar age. Eventually, all these students with this problem get together making a friendship circle of only Japanese students. One good coping strategy is to have a common hobby, but it may still be difficult to make friends unless your English is good enough. (40)

Another student commented:

I think the best way is to meet friends or supportive teachers frequently to consult and discuss the situation. Keeping in touch with someone is the best solution, since there is

a possibility of creating the worst outcome in overseas study if one carries a problem and worry alone. There is no harm in contacting a Japanese person in this event. (64)

Asking advice or help from other people, as a coping strategy, will be discussed in the next section. Other reported methods of coping with human relationships problems are shown in the box below.

Think for myself first. / Consult someone, since too much thinking makes me feel depressed. / I deliberately do not attempt to make more friends. Just having fun with close friends is fine. / Try not to feel pressurized. Try to think of the situation over a long period of time. / Persist and pretend. / As I do not want to waste my valuable time I try to avoid the involvement as much as possible. / If it is not possible to avoid, I seek my friend's advice. / Consult classmates, senior students, or the host family. / Go out with friends. / Shopping and dinner parties. / Complain and seek improvement. If that does not work, just ignore. / Analyse and understand the problem. / Ask the person for a reason and explore a solution. / Get together with a close friend.

(c) Leisure and hobby activities

The reason why 'Leisure and hobby activities' was included as one of the possible problem areas for students was because, in the preliminary interview data, there were a few cases when interviewees commented they had stressful experiences in these activities. Two students mentioned that they had uncomfortable experiences in the music groups they joined. However, other comments, including those given below, often show that hobby and leisure activities usually tend to reduce stressful feelings.

To have fun. / London has everything. / Postpone. / Compromise. / I have my entertainment (resource) such as a CD or video sent from Japan. / Give up. / Hobbies and leisure are for the purpose of dissolving stress. / I go to London and return content. / Try to find something –somewhere else. / Be more moderate. / Have meals with friends.

There were quite a number of additional statements about joining leisure and hobby

activities, which may be described as 'Softening tactics' or just 'Relaxation'.

I read novels in Japanese to change my mood. (51)
Play sport once a week. (95)
TV, film, music, tel., e-mail, sleep, shopping, meeting friends, forget, shower, never be bothered by gossiping. (88)
I make a plan and organize an event in order to enjoy my social life more. I join the Students' Union. I listen to music. I do ballet-dancing and stretch exercise. I go for walks to enjoy nature. I drink herbal tea. I talk with friends. (98)
I drink alcohol (just a glass or so). I share my complaint with someone I can trust. (214)
I go travelling. I read books that are not related to study. I spend a day doing nothing. (198)
I exchange complaints with my classmates. I go to a pub or a party with friends to clear my mind. (199)
I go to a concert, which is my favourite event. I give myself a big reward and then work hard. (211)

Toyokawa, T. and Toyokawa, N. (2002) studied 84 Japanese students, with an average age of 21, on a ten month study programme in the USA and found that 'those students who were more engaged in extra curricular activities reported higher scores, on their satisfaction with life in general in the host country, than students who were not engaged. The high activity engagement group were also more involved in academic work and perceived that they received more benefit from both academic and extra curricular activities.' (p.373)

(d) Culture, customs and habits

It is interesting that this area reveals the least confrontational coping strategies of all problem areas. Less than one in ten students chose the most challenging strategy (option 1) to meet this problem. This could be interpreted in two ways – either a problem, caused by cultural differences, was not too severe, or other coping strategies adopted by students were working very well. Recent technological development is apparently one factor which reduces students' feelings of isolation from their home countries with the help of the Internet, mobile phones, and cheap rates for international telephone calls. All these can help overseas students to feel nearer to their homes. The fact that the UK is an advanced multi-cultural country may also help. For example, a Chinese food shop is a convenient alternative for Japanese students to buy food items similar to their home fare.

One respondent wrote:

I think of the proverb 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do'. I often compromise and change my mind. Talk with friends. Do not think too much. (86)

Some other comments were:

Seek advice from British students or those from Europe. / There is nothing to be done about the different culture and customs. / Consult someone. / Complain to British friends. / Accept that certain inconveniences are inevitable since I live in a foreign country. / Take a bath. / Going to a concert just once or twice a month makes me content. / Release (a problem) by telling a friend. / Try to understand. / Say clearly what I want to say. / Simply admit cultural differences.

(e) Financial issues

The most frequent coping action in this area was to ask parents for help. In Japan responsibility for educational payments is generally considered to be that of the parents although in the case of senior students, especially those who get jobs after graduating from tertiary education, this is not usually the case. An education loan system is not as popular or widespread in Japan as in the UK. Only one in three Japanese students in the survey received all their financial support from their family, while one in ten paid all their fees and other costs from their own savings. The majority of students obtained their financial resources from more than one source. A financial profile of respondents is included in Appendix III.

One PhD student living in London wrote:

Of all my problems the ultimate one was money. My scholarship did not cover the whole period of my PhD course and so, at the end of the period, even a cup of instant noodles seemed to me a very precious food. I tried to be thrifty in every way but depended on support from my husband for the fare to return to Japan, which was worrying to me. (180)

In her case the stress score for dealing with financial problems was 5, the highest score of the five levels.

Additional comments on strategies for coping with financial problems included:

There are times when I feel stressful, but I do not do anything in particular. / Consult with parents. / I wish to find a part time job. I believe that I have to do so. / The only possibility is to consult my parents. / Try to manage somehow. / Look for a scholarship. / Ask my family for money transfer. / There is nothing that can be done, since the required cost is essential. / I only buy absolutely necessary things. / I buy necessary things at a charity shop. / There is no coping strategy, but the only solution is to get a job after graduation. / I do my part-time job and earn my pocket money. / In a desperate situation, parents are the last resort. / Try to forget. / To control income and expenses by keeping a balance sheet. / Drink alcohol. / Look for a vacation job in the summer holidays.

(f) Physical health issues

More than one in three students said that they had no problems in this area. About one in four consulted with someone about how to cope with their health problems. However there were some cases of stress or complaints about hospital procedures. In one case a student (KNX4) telephoned a dental clinic because of a severe toothache only to be told to make an appointment for three weeks later! Also there were a few adverse comments made by students who had experienced difficulty when explaining, in English, symptoms to hospital staff. However, in the preliminary study, there was a comment by a senior Japanese student who received very good care and treatment from UK hospitals, free of charge, which she highly appreciated.

Other comments included:

Go to hospitals whenever I return to Japan. / Go to hospitals. / Go for massage. / Take a bath, relax and go to bed. / Have a good rest. / Spend a leisurely time doing things I like. / Go swimming. / Consult someone. / Take medicine. / Drink alcohol. / Vegetable juice. / Sleep as long as possible. / Take regular medicine. / Mind meals. / Spend an idle hour, doing nothing. / Consult my mother. / Take acupuncture or

massage treatment. / Go to a sports gym. / Pretend to have no problems. / Go out, have physical exercise, and meet people. / Gargle and wash hands regularly.

(g) Psychological issues (e.g. anxiety)

A study of all stress ultimately can be, in one sense, about mental or psychological conditions. However there are specific health problems in this area and nearly half of the respondents answered that they would consult someone about these. People do tend to feel extremely distressed when they do not have any effective or feasible coping strategies. An extreme example was the case of one Japanese male student, in an institution in the north of England, who shut himself off in his room and did not come out for a few weeks. Eventually the police forced an entry to the room and he was taken to the police station. On returning to Japan, he quickly recovered himself back to a normal life.

Other solutions from students were:

Sometimes I cry. / Drink alcohol and listen to music. Compose music. / Telephone to Japan. / A lot of alcohol. / When I am depressed I tend to shut myself up in my room (which is not good). So I try to go shopping, or meet with friends. / I do not consult others. I think alone for myself, sleep and forget. / Keep up (Gambaru) / I tend to become masochistic. / Consult local friends, or if necessary friends in Japan. / Walk. / Sleep. / Play the piano. / Spend a whole day, absentmindedly, doing nothing.

9.2.5. Students' additional comments about their coping strategies

In the preliminary study with 35 Japanese students there was a question about what they thought were the success factors in their study experiences, which had helped them to successfully finish their course. There were two main types of answer. One was to say that they worked very hard, acknowledging the value and effect of their own efforts. The other was to say that they owed their success to support and help given to them by other people including teachers, friends and family members.

These two types of answers were also predominant in the main survey.

(a) Testimonies of self effort

I told myself, 'Never mind! (119)
When problems occurred, I reassured myself that I came here with my own will and that I had a purpose. (124)
I tried to keep my own pace. A firm will is important. (138)
With my optimistic character, I tried not to feel depressed, even if trouble occurred, thinking that it was just an episode of my overseas study experience. (205)
I used problems as a source for my poetry. (6)

(b) Testimonies of support from other people

If there is a big problem I talk to my friends and family, as much as possible, seeking advice. While doing so, there are times that I find a solution for myself. Never store a problem in your own mind. (52)
There were many times when I received help by exchanging letters and telephone calls with my family and friends in Japan. They encouraged me and gave good advice. Also a Japanese friend, who had stayed in the UK for a long time, was a very good advisor for me. (104)
My best coping strategy was not to keep a problem to myself but to consult others. I think it is very important to seek advice from someone you can trust, regardless of their nationality. (178)
When I was first involved with a problem I consulted a British friend of mine in order to avoid leaving the situation uncertain and I made an effort to understand the reason for any differences of opinions and customs. Then I could accept most of these difficulties as natural experiences of my overseas study. (185)
My biggest stress was with human relationships and psychological problems. To cope with them, I tried to understand why the waves of stress got stronger and then weaker. I felt so completely downcast. After this I talked a lot with my teacher and friends. Sometimes I went for a walk, and gazed vacantly at a scene. (188)
I tend to wait for people to talk to me rather than starting a conversation. However, I made an effort to persuade a flat mate to speak to me as much as possible by asking her to teach me cooking. I also tried to avoid my loneliness by asking her to teach me her

own language. (152)

Knowing that there were different cultural practices, I often consulted people in the local area. (266)

I think the best way is to have someone who listens to you. (242)

Finally there were descriptions or comments, which did not fit in any prearranged category of problems, but nevertheless are worth attention. The following box contains verbal data, in relation to these non-specific coping strategies, which include complaint, criticism, doubt and lament.

(c) Statements of complaint, criticism, doubt and regret

(1) *I think it is wrong to try to make English friends just because you want to improve your English, or just because you want to be proud of having an English friend. However, it is very unlikely one can make friends, with common interests, when two people come from different races. It is not a stress but I cannot avoid saying that there is a difficulty in approaching English students. Nevertheless I am hoping to make good friends with anyone from a different nationality. I am not sure how far this kind of wish causes relationships between Japanese people to be more difficult.* (112)

(2) *Sometimes I think it is important to become insensitive.* (155)

(3) *For me there were more troubles with Japanese friendships. At such a time I made a real effort and, if I could not get a good outcome, I just gave up. If I could not find a way to overcome my loneliness, I did outdoor exercises in the daytime and used the Internet at night for relaxation.* (162)

(4) *When I was distressed by people's attitude of racial discrimination, I thought it was also important to know why this happened.* (175)

(5) *London is too expensive. Too many people were ill-mannered.* (254)

(6) *There is a feeling of uncertainty about the future. I consult with someone or just ignore it. I try to concentrate on things I can do now.* (236)

(7) *Inappropriate counselling was a problem. There was a difference of opinion between a course leader and myself. I consulted an English friend who was familiar with both cultures, UK and Asian. The counsellor at my institution was a person who could not understand any other ideas except English ones and would not try to understand the Japanese way of thinking at all. I was very frustrated.* (142)

(8) *It is good to be living in an environment where the Japanese language is not spoken,*

although it increases stress if this situation lasts too long. (274)

(9) *I made my best effort in everything, and then I learned not to care.* (237)

(10) *This is not an overseas study experience onl, but, whenever I feel depressed, I feel completely depressed.* (234)

(11) *When I am busy with my studying, there is no extra time to do anything else.* (239)

(12) *I tried not to accept a stress as a stress.* (258)

In general, those who did not have a clear coping strategy for a particular issue tended to regard this issue as more stressful. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Gross (2001) pointed out that 'Stress helps to keep you alert, providing some of the energy required to maintain an interest in the environment, to explore it and adapt to it. However when we are stretched beyond our limits it becomes positively harmful. It is when we cannot adapt, or find a coping strategy, that the problem becomes most acute.' (p.170)

9.3. Conclusion

The great majority of Japanese students (80%) reported that a desire to improve English was the main motivation in their decision to study in the UK. However, once here, lack of language knowledge or skills often led to stress. The coping strategy for most respondents was to find an answer by their own effort and determination. A compromising strategy came next, with less than 5 % using a 'consulting strategy'. Very little evidence was found to support Ishihara's conclusion reported in Chapter 2 that the higher the degree of stress the more the responding behaviour tends to become instinctive and primitive. In fact students faced with great difficulty were more likely to decide to have a more positive coping strategy. This often involved spending much time and energy on considering alternative ways of coping. Academic problems were met most often by students challenging themselves to find the answer, with a second strategy of consulting with friends or teachers. Another major area of stress was in the area of human relationships where similar percentages of students adopted one of three main strategies, either challenging themselves, compromising, or giving up. In contrast very few students (less than 10%) chose a challenging strategy to cope with problems caused by different cultural factors. Perhaps it was to be expected that the chief coping strategy for financial problems would be to ask parents for help. Again it was not surprising that those with psychological or physical health problems chose to consult someone for their coping strategy.

Many of these points are taken up in the advice and recommendations to future Japanese students and to UKHEIs, which is the subject of the next chapter. No doubt these contributions from respondents often reflected their own experiences of difficulties or those of fellow students in the UK

Chapter Ten. Other Indicators of Japanese Students' Experience in UKHEIs

10.1. Introduction

The final section of the main questionnaire, 'Summary and Advice' (shown in Appendix II) sought to find another way to discover respondents' opinions about their experience of UKHEIs by asking what advice they would give to Japanese students contemplating studying in the UK, and what recommendations they would offer to UK institutions to provide even better support for such students.

In reviewing the answers collected, it should be noted here that, since responses were made earlier than 2005, there might have been some changes in terms of both Japanese students' understanding of what may confront them, and also in the provision made by UK universities for their academic and social welfare. One important change has been the improved acquisition of key information in Japanese using the Internet or mobile phone. This brings a great benefit for Japanese students not only in terms of their study, but also of the enhancement of communication with the students' home country, which definitely helps to reduce students feeling of loneliness away from home. Another change is in the receiving practice of UKHEIs which has improved a great deal in recent years, partly owing to progress in information technology and also through the growing concerns of UK staff to better understand international students. However, the answers, as they stand, are interesting and, moreover, provide insights into those matters which had been of concern to the respondents. What they want to tell others is a clear indication of what they have found to be true and agreeable, or troublesome and stressful, within their own experience.

Mention will also be made of findings from other data, obtained from the preliminary study and main survey, whenever this is relevant. Japanese respondents showed a great deal of willingness to talk about their experiences and to offer advice and recommendations. In doing so they recognised that their experiences of education in the UK were very different from those in Japan.

They were often mindful that some comments can appear to be critical of those who had given them so much care and help. For example, mention of high fee levels or the quality of tuition can be very controversial. However, when considering their contributions it should be remembered that the advice and recommendations to future Japanese students were written solely with an intention to help these students and similarly advice and recommendations to UKHEIs are intended solely for their benefit.

The next section (10.2) deals with advice to future Japanese students drawing on many illustrative quotations from the recommendations of former students in the UK. Section 10.3 is about the advice and recommendations given by Japanese students to UKHEIs to help them to better understand future Japanese students and to assist them in providing services to meet their needs.

10.2. Advice and recommendations to future Japanese students

The main issues that were found by examining and analysing the whole data obtained are listed in Table 10.1 below. The majority of students gave strong emphasis to the first two points.

Table 10.1. Advice and recommendations of survey respondents to future Japanese students. The main issues were:

(a) The need for appropriate English language preparation. (b) The importance of having clear goals. (c) The need to understand the different educational systems and any necessary adjustment when studying in UKHEIs. (d) The need to be aware of the different cultural values of the two countries. (e) The importance of good health (f) The need for social adjustment to cope with problems and misunderstandings with non-Japanese people. (g) How to relate to other Japanese people in the UK. (h) Other issues and suggestions regarding preparation for study in the UK

Detailed examination and discussion of each of these issues now follows below. As in the previous chapter 9, all statements by respondents quoted here were translated into English by the researcher and all students' statements are shown in italics in order to put emphasis on their direct voice in this chapter.

(a) The need for adequate English language preparation

The emphatic advice of the majority of the Japanese students to future Japanese students in the UK was to study the English language as much as possible in Japan before coming to the UK. Here are some typical statements:

I recommend that you prepare adequately for overseas study both in your English language ability and also in your English essay-writing skills.

I should have studied English much more while I was in Japan. This is something I regret, since I did not prepare well for my use of English. If your English is fluent then you will be able to get used to life in the UK much more quickly.

It is of course absolutely necessary that you can speak English well when you come to the UK for study. What is also important is that you clearly know about the culture and social rules, especially the differences from those used in Japan.

In addition, there was the following advice to join a pre-sessional course if it was possible and recommended:

If you are not confident in English, it is better to have a preparatory course to learn how to write a thesis or prepare coursework and gain other essential knowledge without which participation in your course of study could be very difficult.

However, interestingly, there was a slight difference in students' opinions as to whether there are aspects of English language skills that students can better or only learn after coming to the UK. Communication skills are one example which some students believed are better acquired in an English speaking environment. According to one student:

English ability is, of course, important, but communicative competence is even more important. How far one can use English knowledge and skill depends on one's ability to communicate, which is quite distinct from one's written test results.

The same respondent's answer to a question by a potential student, as to whether it

would be all right to come to the UK if the student was not confident in their English ability, was the following:

It will be all right. There is always a way. In my case it was like that and there will be a way for you, provided that you always carry a dictionary with you.

Another respondent emphasised some limitations in the use of dictionaries in the UK:

You must learn vocabulary while you are in Japan. However, once life in the UK starts, learning words from a dictionary is not the best way to increase vocabulary. Choose home-stay accommodation whenever possible, so that you can absorb useful and effective English directly from your daily life. Never hide your inability to understand what a teacher says. Do not pretend that you understood. Avoid becoming a member of a group of Japanese co-national students. Try not to speak Japanese whenever possible.

The importance of high quality English language teaching and learning is a big issue in Japan. The questionnaire-based survey replies (Appendix III) revealed that 85% of survey participants also studied English outside of their school education and only 15 % learned English only in school. The need for improvement of English education in Japan is fully discussed in Section 10.4.

Another piece of advice was that a student should choose a course according to their English ability level. One post-graduate diploma student in Language Teaching mentioned that he did not experience serious difficulties in his course, since he avoided an MA Course deliberately as he knew that it would be too hard for him. It is clearly important to choose the right level of course on enrolment.

Another recommendation was that it is much easier if a student has previous experience of travelling or studying abroad. 52 % of survey participants had more than five experiences of overseas travel. The 10 % of respondents, who came to UK for their first time abroad, experienced much severer stress. The advice therefore to students, who are not sure of their ability, is that it is advisable to have a short period of studying or travelling abroad, as a trial experience, before taking a long full-time course in the UK.

Finally, a kind of warning, from one student:

You will not succeed in study abroad just by longing for it. It is of course absolutely necessary that you can speak English adequately when you start your course in a UKHEI. There are people who do not know anything about Japan, or who have no interest in or have much misunderstanding about Japan. Although you are in a foreign country you should be proud of being Japanese. Otherwise you may be despised or ridiculed by other nationals. The hardest time actually begins after you are able to understand what is spoken in your new surroundings.

An opportunity for English language learning has been identified in the research as the highest motivation (80% choosing answers 5 or 4) for Japanese students who came to the UK for study. It was also found that English language problems caused Japanese students to experience one of the severest degrees of difficulty amongst all stress factors. Whilst it is true that most students from other countries experience difficulties in learning Standard English there seems to be additional difficulties for most Japanese students. The larger class sizes in Japan, the lack of emphasis on communication skills practice and the inability of graduates and even teachers of English to speak English well, have been identified in Chapter Three. The standard and emphases, as well as the target and methods, of English language teaching in Japan have long been a matter of serious national concern.

(b) The importance of having clear goals

The advice to future students about the importance of having clear goals was as emphatic and strong as the advice about the importance of having adequate English language preparation. The advice of three students is given below:

Students who go abroad for study should have very clear purposeful minds and an understanding of exactly why they have chosen to study in the UK. Neither tuition nor living cost is cheap. One year on a post-graduate course passes very quickly and, unless you are clear about what you want to achieve before you start your course, the danger is that most of the year will be over before you realise the answer for yourself.

If I am asked to give advice to my own high school students in Japan, I shall tell them to

come to the UK only after they have seriously considered in detail what they are hoping to achieve. If they were to start their course simply because they like the idea of overseas study superficially, then they would soon find that stress piles up and they may then want to return home after only a few months. In order to fulfil their plan they should think carefully what course they should follow and then try to achieve the English level that is needed for that purpose.

A strong sense of purpose will enable you to gain a lot more. For language learning I think a home stay programme is the best as you have more chance of daily conversation. A hall of residence limits your opportunities.

This advice to have clear goals probably stems partly from the nature of Japanese culture which greatly values an internal goal-oriented mentality. Also there may be something in the nature of overseas study opportunities that causes international students to have this kind of reflection.

Sometimes advice about the importance of having clear goals came with a criticism of other fellow students. Some knew of those who chose to come to the UK because of negative reasons, such as the avoidance of Japanese education, employment or family life.

I am sure that what really matters is determination and self-awareness. In the university which I attended, there were many students who were there because they could not find the employment they desired and so that they could depend completely on their parents' support. It appeared that these students did not have any positive awareness or motivation.

On the other hand, there were some opinions that stressed the importance of clear goals because of a realisation of their own failures or shortcomings.

I would advise you to think through whether you really want to study in the UK and what you would really like to do. In my case my motivation was ambiguous and so I nearly lost sight of myself. I just wanted an 'overseas study.'

The high degree of satisfaction of most Japanese students, with their study in the UK,

indicates their overall success in overcoming most of the various difficulties they encountered. This is probably responsible for their emphasis on the importance of having clear goals. International study experiences require students' conscious choices during their education process, which does not so often happen when students stay in their home country in Japan. This includes choosing options and other course possibilities as well as choices about their way of life in a foreign country.

(c) The need to understand the different educational system and any necessary adjustment when studying in UKHEIs

As mentioned briefly in chapters 3 and 5 (especially see Nipoda in Section 5.2.1) classroom teaching in Japan is often carried out in a much less interactive way than in the UK. This explains why students reported that their severest stress came when a classroom presentation or discussion was required. It also helps in understanding why 90 % of respondents emphasized that students should always speak out in the classroom even though they might make lots of mistakes. This is one of the most significant results of this research since it is well-known that Japanese students tend to keep silent in classroom discussions.

One student wrote:

It is very important to be active and positive. However, make sure your preparation for the class is adequate so that you can avoid asking very basic elementary questions. These may seem stupid to others.

In answering the question 'Should I call my teachers by their first names?', 72 % of respondents gave positive answers. One wrote:

This depends on the teacher. Why not ask each teacher to decide this. It is the same as in Japan where there are teachers who wish to be called Mr. (Ms) X or Professor Y.

One respondent, who took 7 years in the UK to complete his PhD, said that after his return to Japan he still often wondered which address forms he should use when he wrote cards to his teachers. It is interesting to note here that there was only one student who said that it is definitely not right to call a teacher by a first name, and only 7 %

were not keen on this familiarity.

The majority of students emphasized the importance of careful preparation in order to cope with other educational difficulties in the UK. For example, writing a thesis or coursework was often mentioned by students while stressing the importance of developing academic writing skills prior to arrival in the UK.

In answering a more general question 'Is it possible to enjoy my overseas life while having a heavy work load in a different educational environment?', 71% of respondents said 'definitely' or 'probably' yes.

(d) The need to be aware of the different cultural values of the two countries

The following account explains how one student, on an MA course in Architecture, formed a very definite opinion of the UK as a result of her experience in the UK. Her account, though sharply critical in parts, at least shows her attempt to be fair to both countries.

I became critical of the UK after I did a post-graduate course there. ...I could not be happy that English teachers tend to praise exclusively British culture and arts including architecture and the fine arts.... Rather than feeling grateful to the UK, I would be pleased if they thanked me for paying expensive tuition fees or offering neighbours a Japanese meal. However, the prevailing individualism, so that people never interfere with another's privacy, is brilliant. This is what is best in UK culture, that I adore most of all, and is not so often found in Japan. I also admire the fair-play spirit and that people do not use double standards. In this sense I wish Japan could take the UK as a model in learning how to deal with other nations. I also admire the fact that they are mean to themselves and, at the same time, so generous in donating for others, unlike Japanese people who are rather narrow-minded. They do not pretend that they do not know those in desperate need for help, which is a sign of a mature society. This is also an issue for Japan to tackle from now on.

Advice on racial harassment, given by one student, included a touch of warning. She wrote:

Social customs are very different between Japan and the UK. You should be aware that there will be times when you will experience racial discrimination which you will never experience in Japan. My advice is to remember that 'studying abroad' is not just a fun time.

Some students were concerned about the use of more direct communication styles in the UK than in Japan.

What I learned was not from books. I learnt that I should be confident with my own way, knowing that this is necessary in the UK or Europe. I could even become assertive enough to talk to someone whom I did not know, which was good. Do not take a modest way. Be assertive, express your opinions well and make any requests clear. Of course there is a responsibility for you in all this. Use your self-confidence and always be positive in fulfilling your life dream.

The following comment is also related to the difference in communication styles between the two countries but expresses more outspokenly the student's love of his own country, of which he only really became aware after more than 7 years of living in the UK.

If there are people who cannot make up their mind, I hope they will decide to come to the UK for study. I am one of those who likes my own country very much. I hope that future students will know how good life in Japan is, which I believe they will realise after going out of the country. Nevertheless, communication in the UK is very direct and easy, although I like the Japanese language very much.

The survey found that 63 % of the respondents answered 'most or fairly applicable' to the statement that 'their awareness of Japanese identity has been strengthened as a result of living in the UK'. A student's testimony below illustrates that there were frequent opportunities for students to become more aware of their own culture.

There are many occasions when I have to face the fact that I am Japanese. Thinking recently of my job search after the course made me aware of my Japanese nationality. At other times when people asked me about KABUKI or an ancient Japanese philosopher, in the Kamakura period, I could not give an answer. I was therefore a bit

ashamed of myself.

One student mentioned the importance of learning about the culture of the UK, emphasizing the importance of self-confidence and politeness:

Try to connect your previous knowledge with new knowledge that you are hoping to acquire. You should know about the culture of the country where you are going to study. There are often possibilities of misunderstanding. You should have at least a basic knowledge of manners and etiquette, although sometimes it happens that you are forgiven just because you are a foreigner. Sometimes you may feel quite upset but you can overcome this if you are confident in yourself. Just as study is important, so it is also important to make friends with many people.

There were several testimonies that hardships and difficulties of overseas study are nevertheless worthwhile and valuable experiences. One is given below:

Learning how to overcome hardship itself seems to be one of many advantages of studying overseas. This includes problems of language as well as those of living accommodation in the UK and many other problems. By experiencing these difficulties and by overcoming them it means that students gain something more valuable than just a degree. Therefore it is important to regard any stress as part of a necessary and inevitable experience during the study period when you should aim for friendships to help you to overcome this stress and succeed.

(e) The importance of good health

Advice on the importance of good health and fitness during the stay in the UK was also given. Since poor weather in the UK was found to be a cause of stress for 30 % of respondents and unfamiliar food for 17 %, it is not perhaps surprising that the following advice was given to future students:

First of all, you should look after your own health. Everything else will then take care of itself. In the UK, the total time that the sun shines is very short, which tends to make you feel depressed and may cause a lack of necessary nutrients. So try to keep fit by doing exercises and having proper meals.

One preliminary survey respondent mentioned that she felt a stress or pressure that she must not become ill (living away from her home country). Trying to keep healthy is an important requirement and internal pressure for international students.

(f) The need for social adjustment and coping with problems and misunderstandings with non-Japanese people

The majority of students who gave advice about relationships urged future students to try hard to make friends with both British and other international students. To quote one:

Try to communicate with as great a variety of people as possible. Work hard with a purpose. It is possible to read books anytime, but opportunities of communication with other people are limited. There is often a bonus if you have your own special skill or hobby.

There was also a comment on the difficulty in forming friendships in a hall of residence.

The hall of residence does not provide a good study environment. There are human relationship problems – European students and young Asian students form their own separate groups. It can be difficult to have good relationships.

In answering the question 'Will teachers and friends be supportive at your institution' a student wrote:

It is all up to your attitude. If you are positive and behave naturally, people will support you. Please do not just wait, thinking that it can be taken for granted that others are going to help you. Do not merely seek for answers among friends.

About 61 % of respondents said in their replies that they had found that teachers and friends in the UK were definitely or quite supportive, whilst less than 12 % said this was not always true.

(g) How to relate to other Japanese people in the UK

There are three types of advice given by students about this. One type of advice is to warn future students not to join a group of only Japanese students but to also make friends with students of other nationalities. One good reason can be for the sake of learning more English.

Do not join a group of only Japanese students. Try not to speak Japanese whenever possible. Always be aware why you are abroad and away from home.

This can be explained partly because the use of Japanese, their mother tongue, is believed to hinder and decrease opportunities of improving their ability in English. Another reason is the fact that Japanese students in UKHEIs sometimes suffer a great deal of stress which is caused by gossiping among co-national friends. This was found to be particularly severe when students belonged to 'the twenties' age group. This is explained in the comment by a student given below:

Gossiping among the Japanese was very annoying when I was taking an MA course in my university. I persuaded myself not to be involved.

Despite the advice given above, it is obvious that co-national friends can help each other a great deal, and this forms a positive basis for yet another type of advice. One MA student studying Language Teaching expressed her gratitude to a senior PhD student in the same department, who gave her both advice and comfort at a time of heavy work pressure. She commented:

Seek advice from those who have finished their overseas study already, especially from those who took a similar course to your own. I realised how helpful it was to receive advice from someone who had graduated from the same university.

(h) Other issues and suggestions about preparation for study in the UK

Several students mentioned the importance, in preparation, of searching for information about the courses and subjects they were intending to study.

If you wish to study in the UK in order to get a degree, then you should first make a preliminary search for where you should go, what you wish to study and whether there are teachers in your field. You should choose a place where there is a department with the closest subject to the one which you wish to pursue, as time is always limited in your study programme.

Previous preparation is necessary. You need to make sure that you are really determined to finish the course. If not, it is possible to fail in the middle. It is important to share information about course procedures. An individual is better than a group programme.

Another respondent advised:

It is advantageous if you study research methods and statistics whilst in Japan. It matters a lot if you have special knowledge besides English. Do not choose an institution just because it is well known in Japan, or you may later find that this is not exactly what you wanted. You should try to clearly foresee your primary goal.

Rather surprisingly a number of students emphasized the importance of students knowing about their own country and its culture.

I think people should learn properly about Japan before going abroad. The idea that if you go abroad you will learn more is wrong. Seeing some Japanese students who go abroad for study with little knowledge about Japan makes me think that they do not have much to contribute.

Advice was also given about the danger of trying to spend too much time continuing links with Japan.

It is better that you do all the preparation that you can whilst in Japan. When going to the UK you should bring books about Japan rather than English books or books about the UK. You will have to answer many questions about your culture and history. In my case I could not stop making contact with Japan, which made me worried about not being able to concentrate on my study. I would now advise that it is better to disconnect Japanese links.

There were, of course, also suggestions for students to acquire knowledge about the UK before going there.

It is very helpful if you learn not only the language but also the customs and culture of the country where you intend to study. It may also help to increase your conversational opportunities.

In addition to advice to take pre-sessional courses, students were also recommended to arrive in the UK some time earlier than the actual start of the course.

I recommend you to go to the UK about a month earlier than the start of the course. If you can make friends with people there, you can share your problems with them. Also opening a bank account, and other necessary procedures, can then be completed before the course starts.

It is best to prepare as much as possible. I recommend a pre-sessional course because you can make friends with some of your course-mates. I enjoyed my two-month pre-sessional course as well as the outings at weekends which was great for a change of mood.

In addition to the advice given by respondents to particular questions, the findings of the whole research provides a valuable source of further information and advice about students' experience of study and everyday life in the UK. There is naturally a tendency to concentrate on those stress situations and factors which are experienced by the majority of Japanese students. However it has been emphasised in this research that just because only say 10 % or 20 % reported a particular stress problem it does not mean that this is not an important factor. It may well have been the critical factor for these students. Future students who experience such stress may have much to learn from their successful coping strategies and will certainly derive some reassurance in recognising that they are not the only students with this difficulty.

For example 14 % of students experienced moderate or extreme stress in trying to get support from family or friends in Japan whilst 53 % reported that they experienced no stress at all in this. Families in Japan have strong relationships, with much more

protection usually being given to young people, and also with a strong belief in the value of conformity. Since free higher education is not provided by the state, students are heavily dependent on their parents' and grandparents' financial support. In the UK students do not realise so clearly that their parents are often helping them indirectly through the taxation system as well as giving what extra support they can to help them to pay the new university fees when subsidies are not available. Japanese students worried about their families may have an urgent need for counselling and help from friends.

The research also often provides data which puts individual complaints or concerns into a clearer perspective. For example only 29 % of students found that getting used to UK weather was fairly or extremely stressful whilst 53 % found little or no stress at all in coping with the climate. Of course there is a very wide range of weather throughout Japan so which part of Japan a student came from could also be a an important factor. The question of racial discrimination has also been mentioned. It is important for future students to know that there are strict laws on racial discrimination in the UK, and the fact that only 6 % of students reported that this factor was particularly stressful for them gives some reassurance that this is not a major problem for most Japanese students in the UK. The research has also revealed many specific mistakes or misunderstandings which may help future students to avoid them. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 3.5.3, when a teacher or senior adult gives a present to a student in Japan it is impolite to say 'thank you' since this implies an equality of relationship. The favour is regarded as too much indebtedness far beyond the word of merely saying 'thank you', which may appear to be expressing the least gratitude. This often causes Japanese students in the UK to say 'Sorry' when given a present and this can itself cause tension (Chapter 3.4.3). The same chapter emphasised that learning to say 'Yes, please' or 'No, thank you' when offered say a cup of tea is also essential advice which will help in forming relationships in the UK. A simple 'Yes' or 'No' can sound rude in the UK. However, the fact that only about 2 % of students felt that they had made hardly any progress in challenging difficulties or overcoming feelings of stress whilst in the UK will itself be reassuring to future students.

The summary of the data from the main survey about advice to future Japanese students is shown in the following table. (10.2)

Table 10.2. Replies from survey respondents to possible questions from prospective future Japanese students in UKHEIs
(The underlined figure with an asterisk shows the highest result of each item.)

Questions from future Japanese students.	5= Definitely yes	4= Rather yes	3= Unable to say	2= Rather no	1= Definitely no	N/A (%)	Mean (S.D.)
(a) Is it easier to study English in the UK than in Japan?	81 (28.4%)	85* (29.8%)	69 (24.2%)	33 (11.6%)	17 (6.0)	0	3.63 (1.18)
(b) I am not sure of my English ability. Is it all right if I go for study in the UK?	69 (24.2%)	80* (28.0%)	64 (22.5%)	53 (18.6%)	19 (6.7%)	0	3.48 (1.23)
(c) Do you think it is worthwhile to go for overseas study, even if I have to borrow money?	34 (11.9%)	68 (23.9%)	119* (41.8%)	38 (13.3%)	26 (9.1%)	0	3.16 (1.09)
(d) Should I take a pre-sessional language course?	54 (18.9%)	95* (33.3%)	84 (29.5%)	27 (9.5%)	18 (6.3%)	7 (2.5)	3.50 (1.11)
(e) Should I speak out in the classroom even though I make lots of mistakes?	155* (54.4%)	102 (35.8%)	21 (7.4%)	7 (2.5%)	0	0	4.42 (0.74)
(f) I am not confident in my ability. Can I follow at the UK academic level?	22 (7.7%)	77 (27.0%)	129* (45.3%)	39 (13.7%)	16 (5.6%)	2 (0.7)	3.18 (0.96)
(g) Are teachers and friends supportive at your institution?	101* (35.4%)	72 (25.3%)	81 (28.4%)	19 (6.7%)	8 (2.8%)	4 (1.4)	3.92 (0.90)
(h) Should I call my teachers by their first names?	81 (28.4%)	122* (42.8%)	61 (21.4%)	20 (7.0%)	1 (0.4%)	0	3.85 (1.08)
(i) Is it possible to enjoy my life of overseas study whilst having a heavy work load?	100 (35.0%)	102* (35.8%)	60 (21.0)	19 (6.7%)	3 (1.1%)	1 (0 4)	3.98 (0.96)
(j) Should I restrict my contact with other Japanese during my overseas study?	12 (4.2%)	24 (8.4%)	93* (32.6%)	86 (30.2%)	69 (24.2%)	1 (0.4)	2.38 (1.07)

10.3. Advice and recommendations of Japanese students to UKHEIs

The list below shows issues of students' advice and recommendations given to UKHEIs. Unsurprisingly the strongest emphasis was given to the first point, high tuition fees in the UK.

(a) High tuition fees
(b) The quality of teaching in the UK
(c) The curriculum and academic support
(d) Administration and organization
(f) Accommodation problems
(g) Availability of library use
(h) Other miscellaneous matters

(a) High tuition fees

A great number of Japanese students complained that the tuition fees of UKHEIs are too expensive. Students, of course, realised that this was due to government policy. Nevertheless, it was hoped that the strength of these stressful feelings about this matter would help UKHEIs in their representations to Government. There were four types of comment on this issue.

First of all, students recognised this by comparison with the fees of international students from the European Union.

The difference of tuition fees between EU and non-EU students is ridiculously big.

Some universities in the UK do give financial help to overseas students with particular merit in their academic results. This is greatly appreciated but the availability of bursaries is severely limited in most UKHEIs.

Secondly, some students were concerned about the admission of students with poor qualifications and its effect on the quality of tuition.

The fees for students from abroad, excluding EU countries, are too expensive. It

appears that the institutions sometimes admit overseas students just because they want to collect the money.

Tuition fees are too expensive. Universities accept students who have not reached a high enough level of English for their courses. I wish that they would offer overseas students more financial support.

This has become controversial, in the present financial crisis, when many UK home students have been unable to obtain a university place in 2009, whilst overseas students, bringing a source of extra university finance, have been successful.

Thirdly, there was a complaint from a few students about the large class size on some courses.

Despite the amount of fee money we paid for our tuition, there is a doubt that we received the right level of education. There is room for improvement. Large classes should be reduced to fewer numbers.

The opportunity to get a fees discount for those who pay all their tuition fees together in advance would be a big help.

There was also a request to consider the establishment of an assistantship scheme as in some American universities. It is obvious that the number of future Japanese students choosing to study in the UK will be strongly influenced by the level of tuition fees. Students' complaints about high tuition fees were also sometimes related to various educational shortcomings in their courses such as the cancellation of classes, lack of facilities and reference books, shortage of handouts distributed in the class, long holidays, frequent change of lecturers and the change occasionally of the curriculum/courses provided compared with the brochure description. All these factors made some students feel even more disappointed with the high cost of higher education in the UK.

(b) The quality of teaching in the UK

Both appreciation and criticism of teachers were mentioned by a number of respondents. One student strongly requested improvements in the teaching style used in universities.

I think that teachers in the UKHEIs should be more generous and positive in advice, teaching and conveying knowledge or information. If this is not possible in the field of Economics or Sociology, why can they not provide a direct message about what is the most interesting issue in each area. I think that teachers in the UKHEIs are adopting a role of manager / facilitator too much. I wish that each teacher's expertise could be described more clearly. I did not even know most of my teachers' special field or expertise. Valuable up-to-date lectures by specialists would be much more appreciated than the teacher merely conducting or encouraging discussions among students.

Some criticism was made about the difficulty in contacting teachers, but there were many comments of appreciation of UK teachers. Two examples are given below:

The place, to which I belonged, where most of the students were from abroad, was a very fortunate choice since all teachers and staff were very conscientious and kind. I was very lucky.

I liked the teaching style of my university, which I could enjoy partly because of my background education in Japan. I was pleased when my teacher said that I had a good ability of reading data. Every two weeks I had a tutorial. I also thought that the lectures in my undergraduate course were wonderful with so much variety of topics. Presentation methods were also good as were tutorials. In my Japanese University I had only one main teacher whose speciality was just in one area (Pragmatics), but here there are specialists in various areas, together with a good quality of database. The library is also very well equipped. Plenty of staff. I was really pleased to have chosen my present institution.

(c) The curriculum and academic support

Four groups of comments were made on this topic. The first group made a request for more academic support for international students.

If there was a support system for academic writing then the students' workload would be much lightened. For example, overseas students are often unable to check grammar and style for their coursework.

In Japanese universities there was not enough thesis writing training. I heard that in other departments teachers edited students' essays. But in my TESOL (language teaching) courses there are some that will fail (as there was no such help). Having accepted students I wish departments would support them properly.

The UK institution should give more information to Japanese students. They should provide more care. Visually as well. Then perhaps the numbers of those who fail will decrease.

I think that UK institutions should provide a more general academic English writing course free of charge.

The second group of comments included many compliments, acknowledgements, appreciation and gratitude.

I hope universities will continue to listen to voices of non-native speakers. I thought my institution had that attitude. Their explanations were reasonably clear and convincing and that was also reflected in the curriculum, which was great.

The curriculum I followed was very well arranged and academic support was excellent. When I was writing a thesis a teacher with academic writing skill looked after me, which was a great help. I was also provided with a course of essay writing without assessment, which was really good.

A third group of comments included criticism of some aspects of academic provision.

In the USA there is a Language Centre where they offer a service of proof-reading. The UK Institutions should also be prepared to help overseas students once they decide to admit them. I wish they would arrange a welcoming environment so that the campus was friendlier for overseas students. I heard from a friend of mine, who went to the USA for study, that it was possible to take an academic writing class there. I expected that UK universities would have fewer students so that more care could be given to them.

The fourth group of comments include some controversial opinions whilst trying to balance both the pros and cons of education in the UK.

Once enrolled, I understood that both home and overseas students had equal opportunities. However because of the difference in language ability there was a big disadvantage for some, which native speakers could not understand, though it is true that overseas students chose UKHEIs knowing the situation. It is also true that if handicapped overseas students were given extra help, then that would lessen students' own initiatives. This is a subtle and difficult point.

There are things that you cannot expect the institution to do for you. The institution should teach the English language but the rest is up to each student. Teachers in the UK do not give too much advice to a student writing a thesis although I agree that there is no need to look after a student's thesis writing in detail from A to Z. Certainly academic writing skill is necessary.

One student appreciated that her institution had accepted her to start in April, the start of the academic year in Japan, which was a great advantage when leaving her teaching job for a year.

It is clear that there is a great need for universities to offer courses starting in April, especially for Asian students. This could lead to more Asian universities adopting courses with a year abroad incorporated in their degree work.

(d) Administration and organisation to provide a support system for students

There were three groups of opinions on this topic. The first group was one of praise and appreciation.

I thought my university had a very good support system for overseas students. I was very content with it.

The second group contained opinions, requests, or suggestions for improvement.

Overseas students tend not to ask for counselling or any other psychological support. This should not be attributed merely to the cultural background of international students, but also to the kind and quality of counselling on offer.

Overseas students face a potential risk that they may have difficulty or disadvantage in gaining employment upon returning after they finish their courses. UK institutions should not expect all of them to return home after the course. Job search guidance should therefore be available for overseas students.

I wished I could get some help with my visa problem. My problem with office administration was that I was told to wait for hours and hours and then finally told to come back the following day.

There are other problems as well as with studies. House-search, visa renewal, transportation etc. It would be much appreciated if visa extension was supported by universities.

Once institutions accept overseas students they should have a proper support system. In my course (TESOL) there was very little support compared with other departments and institutions. Tutorials should be carried out with more systematic methods. As for proof-reading, I wish UKHEIs would develop their support services. In some Australian universities I heard that PhD students look after MA-level students, thus forming a better students' link.

As there is a huge wall of language difficulty, I think it is necessary for the institution to

provide a psychological support system with counsellors.

I wish UK institutions would try to provide more home information for Japanese students. At mine the purchase of a Japanese newspaper was requested by a group of Japanese students and the institution started to subscribe to the ASAHI Newspaper, which made us all feel very pleased and relieved.

The third group commented on the administrative system and office personnel.

I thought that people in the administration-office were very unkind. They stuck to formality and did not attempt to give any individual care. Every person working there told a different story. However after changing the department for my second MA, in the same institution, I was lucky in having excellent tutors.

The members of staff at the international office did not seem to be aware of how to deal with overseas students. However they, and also the English language teachers, were very kind and gave excellent service very speedily. At another university office members of staff were so unkind that it would make no difference if they did not exist.

Some staff at the reception counter seem to assume that students, who have non-European faces, cannot speak English even before they start talking to them.

(e) Accommodation problems

A request for more considerate staff in the 'Housing' and the 'International Students' Office' was made.

In my institution I received a very bad response from the staff in the Housing Office. They were extremely unkind which made me feel concerned about my student life in the UK. Most overseas students live in halls of residence, so I wish the institution understood that the Housing Office is as important as the International Office for overseas students.

A few students commented on the importance of keeping halls of residence welcoming and clean.

I wanted to live in a cleaner hall of residence. Although my course was hard I had no complaint. The advice I would like to give to my institution is about the hall of residence. It was very noisy.

The following two tables show the overall information given by students about the problems they encountered in their accommodation.

Table 10.3. The satisfaction rate for survey respondents' accommodation

Satisfaction degree of the accommodation	5=Very satisfied.	4=Fairly satisfied.	3=Not sure.	2=Slightly dis-satisfied.	1=Very dis-satisfied.	Other / NA	Mean Satis-faction
	69 (24.2%)	147 (51.6%)	23 (8%)	28 (9.8%)	10 (3.5%)	8 (2.8%)	3.86

Table 10.4. The main reason for dissatisfaction with survey respondents' accommodation

Reason	No. of students	% of students
Noisy	34	11%
Expensive	30	10%
Unclean	29	10%
Kitchen facility problems	19	7%
Bathroom problems	17	6%
Too old	16	6%
Too small	12	4%
Common use problems	11	4%
Owner problems	10	3%
Meal problems	9	3%
Heating problems	8	3%
Too far from campus	8	3%

(f) Availability of library use

The need for longer opening hours was mentioned.

It is absolutely necessary that the library is open for 24 hours.

In American universities the library was open for 24 hours, but here in the UK the opening hours are very limited. Also the number of computers available is less than in the USA.

A request for more books about core-subjects and also some to help overseas students.

There should be more books in the library. I found textbooks on core subjects were in short supply as well as computers.

(g) Miscellaneous matters

The bus pass is expensive and buses do not come on time.

Halls of residence for graduate students should be separate from undergraduate students' halls.

Words written on a white board are very difficult to read. The quality of teachers varied – sometimes the English of non-native language teachers was very difficult to understand.

When considering students' advice to UKHEIs it is important not to confine this to answers by a few students to specific questions. The whole research data is also extremely important in giving a clear perspective on the comments or criticism of students. For example the quality of the information service at some universities has been criticised. The questionnaire data shows that 45 % of Japanese students were disappointed with this service and only 30 % could say that they believed that the quality of service was, in their opinion, good enough. There were also criticisms of the service provided through the advisory offices in universities. The data shows that 28 % of Japanese students were critical of this service while 33 % experienced what they

described as good service.

Those who had experience of English language pre-sessional courses were evenly divided in their opinion, with 55 % saying the courses worked well and 20 % disagreeing. This does not, of course, mean that some students were not in favour of such courses but rather that there is clearly room for improvement in these courses in some universities. 45 % of students believed that universities should provide more courses on training for academic skills and 49 % would like to see improvements in the curriculum and courses for international students.

Universities can take some comfort from the fact that only 9 % of the students were not satisfied with the results and methods of assessment and only the same percentage would not recommend future Japanese students to come to the institution where they had studied. Only 4% were not content with their decision to study in their own institution.

Of course UKHEIs are not only concerned with students' evaluation of their quality of provision. Anything which can help them to understand the experience and difficulties of Japanese students can be helpful. For example, the fact that, owing to large class sizes in Japan, it is not customary for students to make many oral contributions in class lessons. This is a challenge to the UK teacher to find ways of helping students to overcome their lack of confidence without feeling under excessive pressure. Some universities have noticed that Japanese students are slow in forming friendships with other students. This may be partly due to a lack of emphasis on communication skills in the teaching of English language in Japan. Finding ways of bringing Japanese students together with other students in activities or social events outside the classroom may provide some real help to them.

In summary, the raw data from the main survey about students' advice to UKHEIs is shown in the table below. The bold figure in the table shows the reply chosen by the highest percentage of respondents to each question.

Table 10.5. Survey respondents' replies to possible questions from the staff of UKHEIs

Questions from UK institutions	5= Definitely yes	4= Rather yes	3= Unable to say	2= Rather no	1= Definitely no	No Ans. (%)	Mean (S.D.)
(k) Is our institution good enough to receive students from abroad?	25 (8.8%)	**110 (38.6%)**	69 (24.2%)	57 (20.0%)	19 (6.7%)	5 (1 8)	3.23 (1.08)
(l) Should we provide more courses on training for academic skills?	46 (16.1%)	82 (28.8%)	**93 (32.6%)**	45 (15.8%)	9 (3.2%)	10 (3.5)	3.40 (1.05)
(m)Do our English language pre-sessional courses work well?	15 (5.3%)	56 (19.6%)	**121 (42.5%)**	39 (13.7%)	18 (6.3%)	36 (12.6)	3.04 (0.96)
(n) Should we improve our curriculum and courses for foreign students?	56 (19.6%)	**85 (29.8%)**	79 (27.7%)	24 (8.4%)	10 (3.5%)	31 (10.9)	3.60 (1.05)
(o)Do you think the government should reduce the foreign students' fees?	**232 (81.4%)**	28 (9.8%)	19 (6.7%)	1 (0.4%)	1 (0.4%)	4 (1.4)	4.74 (0.63)
(p) Is the information service inside our institution good enough?	19 (6.7%)	65 (22.8%)	66 (23.2%)	**86 (30.2%)**	42 (14.7%)	7 (2.5)	2.76 (1.17)
(q) Does our foreign students' advisory office provide good service?	13 (4.6%)	80 (28.1%)	**101 (35.4%)**	50 (17.5%)	31 (10.9%)	10 (3.5)	2.98 (1.06)
(r) Are you content with your decision to come to your institution?	**121 (42.5%)**	116 (40.7%)	29 (10.2%)	7 (2.4%)	6 (2.1%)	6 (2.1)	4.22 (0.89)
(s) Are you convinced with the result of your assessment and its methods?	46 (16.1%)	**133 (46.7%)**	70 (24.6%)	19 (6.7%)	6 (2.1%)	11 (3.9)	3.71 (0.90)
(t) Can you recommend any other Japanese to come to your institution?	78 (27.4%)	**102 (35.8%)**	72 (25.3%)	18 (6.3%)	8 (2.8%)	7 (2.5)	3.80 (1.01)

10.4. The need for improvement in English education in Japan

The answers from the questionnaire emphasized this need. It is clear that many of the levels of stress of Japanese students in the UK could have been reduced if they had brought with them both a better understanding of teaching methods used in the UK and also a better ability to communicate effectively in English. The Third International Maths and Science Study (TIMSS), carried out in December 2008 in 41 leading countries, showed that Japan was in the top three places for both Science and Maths scores for pupils aged 9 and 13. (Website: International Test Scores) Despite this, research with international students has shown that difficulty with English language was the most significant problem for Japan in contrast to other countries.(Chapter 5.2) This is surprising particularly when one remembers that all students graduating from senior high schools in Japan have studied English for at least six years. Those who have completed a higher education will all have had two years extra English tuition regardless of their course specialization. It must be remembered that English language is very different from Japanese, with a completely different word order in sentences, and that there is very little opportunity for students to use English in their daily lives in Japan.

The Japanese state university entrance examination in English is based on translation and grammar with the need to memorise much vocabulary and even minute details of English grammar. However there is practically no test of communication skills. The class size is large, often averaging about 40 to 50 students, so that there is little opportunity for students to ask questions. The group, rather than the individual, is of central importance with the focus being on following the instructions of the teacher. Pupils who excel at English soon learn not to be boastful and this tends to make them quiet and reserved in class.

In 2009 English was the most popular subject in the state university entrance examination with 500,297 candidates (98.6 % of all candidates), even higher than the number for Japanese language examination (485,045). In sharp contrast candidates for Chinese only numbered 409, French 149, German 106 and Korean 136.
(Website http://www.dnc.ac.jp/center_exam/21exam/pdf/h21_gaiyou.pdf January 2009)

There have been many different suggestions on how to improve teaching of the English language, with an emphasis on the need to be more fluent in English, in order to prosper in a global economy. For some years the government has promoted a 'JET' scheme (The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme) to provide some students with more direct contact with native speakers of English. Despite the popularity of the scheme, the need for many of the students to take the state university entrance examination, with little emphasis on oral work, still remains the chief obstacle to change.

Another suggestion, supported by many English teachers, has been to introduce the teaching of English at a younger age in the elementary school. The Japanese government has recently decided that the pupils in the top two years in elementary schools (aged 11 and 12) should have two 45 minute periods of English language teaching each week from 2010. Already some elementary schools have started with one 45 minute lesson. There is also a government plan to train teachers to implement these new proposals. It is believed by many educationalists that there is an urgent need to change the method of examination in English for university entrance to include an emphasis on a student's ability to communicate in English. Following the start of this research, there has been an introduction in 2006 of a listening test in English in the state university system carrying 20 % of the total marks. There have been considerable technical difficulties affecting these listening tests and students' preparation through class work has been very limited. There is still no speaking test in the examination, probably because parents are very powerful in Japan and they would not easily accept the results of an oral assessment. Even more importantly many Japanese teachers, partly because of their own English language learning in Japan, do not feel confident about their ability to speak English.

Aspinall (2003), a teacher of English Studies at two Japanese universities, wrote the following comments on the views of some prominent Japanese nationalists in a chapter of a book entitled 'Can the Japanese Change their Education System?': 'Nationalists are concerned that Japanese people are over eager to learn English and to absorb Western Culture. They believe that there is a danger that this will undermine their own distinctive Japanese identity and language.' (p.108) According to Aspinall (ibid) their main aim is to change the emphasis from learning from foreigners to learning to express their own ideas to them, with more time to be spent studying Japanese history and culture rather than that of Western world. They also believe that there should also be

more teaching of other foreign languages so that there is not over-reliance on English language sources of information about world affairs.

However this is still very much a minority view and overall the one definite conclusion for the majority of the Japanese people is that there must be a change in the teaching of English to include more emphasis on listening and speaking skills.

10.5. Conclusion

It is important to recognize the way in which these reflective comments from students have enriched our understanding of their experience in UKHEIs. For when the students offer advice or criticism, on the basis of their own experience, they are saying something about the way they have reacted to that experience. Their views reflect very clearly where they have encountered stress and how they have had themselves to find a way of coping with this. In a sense, these views cannot provide objective truth about how things are, but they do give a measure of students' own perceptions and response.

For example when so many students comment about excessive tuition fees and imply that this is something UKHEIs can materially affect, this is merely showing just how stressful this problem has been for them and the unfairness they perceive when they compare their fees with those of EU students. When offering advice to these students this is something that should be in the minds of the counsellors.

To take another example, this time a piece of advice given to future students. They are urged to be ready to play a full part in class discussion or seminars and to ask questions whenever they cannot understand the teacher. This is a reflection of the stress many of the students expressed themselves during their study period in the UK, in some cases becoming a major problem for them and causing much anxiety.

Japanese students in the UK recognize that the two most important ways of preparation for study in the UK are through intensive and more effective English language learning in Japan or abroad and the development of a strong sense of purpose and clear goals to motivate students throughout their stay in the UK.

However problems involving human relationships, finance and cultural differences between Japan and the UK can present equally severe difficulties and stress for some students. It is hoped that future students can identify with some of the students who have provided detailed personal descriptions of their problems together with their recommendations. Clearly, once they join a UKHEI, finding someone to whom they can turn for help and advice is of great importance. Developing and maintaining friendships with other students is also a key issue in achieving a well balanced life in the UK. Comments from students showed that they were generally grateful for all the help they had been given by teachers and administrators.

However a major problem is a lack of courses starting in April to coincide with the start of the academic year in Japan and elsewhere in Asia. There was also a desire by many students for more help with academic writing skills and more assistance with applications for visa extension. Some UKHEIs try to provide a support system, by arranging social events, so that students can meet with others with whom they can make friendships. Those early days in the UK can clearly be time of culture shock and confusion for some students, especially those who have never been abroad before.

Turner and Robson (2008) in their book '*Internationalizing the University*' emphasize that HEIs cannot afford to be complacent in working with international students. Their advice is that: 'Understanding diverse student motivations and educational expectations and responding appropriately to students' support requirements is essential to an academically and socially inclusive environment and a high-quality student experience.' (p.58)

This chapter has dealt with the seventh of the subsidiary research questions given in Chapter 1.4 that needed to be addressed. As well as providing the advice and recommendations covered by this question it has also revealed concerns that the respondents must have felt either about their own experiences or those of their fellow students. There now remains a need to add qualitative information, obtained through interviews, to the data obtained from the questionnaires. This will be described in the next chapter which will also provide an answer to the sixth inter-related research question by investigating how levels of stress are related to time factors throughout a student's period of stay in the UK.

Chapter Eleven. Follow-up Interviews

11.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the third stage of the research, the in-depth interviews. It reports on the process, the resulting data, and its importance within this study. The actual face to face interviews were carried out in March and April 2005. After the investigations, described in the previous four chapters (7, 8, 9 and 10), which dealt with two sets of data from the preliminary and the main survey, further questions were identified, some of which suggested a need for in-depth interviews in order to shed more light on both stress factors and coping strategies for the following reasons:

(1) In the research the main aim has been to investigate Japanese students' stressful experiences, particularly those of language, academic, and socio-cultural difficulties. The preliminary interviews indicated that language difficulties were the most serious ones, whilst the main questionnaire survey found them to be in the academic area. Whilst it was clear that there was a considerable overlap in these two areas, this nevertheless invited further investigation.

(2) The first set of data, obtained by preliminary interviews, did not measure the degree of stress and the second was unable to examine time factors involved in students' perception of stressful experiences. When and how students felt stress also needed further investigation.

(3) Since the main survey was formulated by premeditated categories of questions, it might not have identified some factors that nevertheless existed in the area of research. Some of these could be more easily identified verbally by interviews.

(4) Questions related to the quality and nature of stressful experiences perceived during the study period in the UK, such as why, when and how students had these difficulties and how they tried to overcome them, could not be fully answered by the quantitative survey.

There is no doubt that interviewing is a very effective method of generating qualitative

data. Consideration of the strength and weakness of these follow-up interviews will be found in section 11.2.2.(c).

11.2. The conduct of the interviews

11.2.1. An account of the interviews

(a) The sampling process

Stage 1

A cover-letter, sent with the main questionnaire, mentioned the possibility of a follow-up interview, for which e-mail addresses were requested as a respondent's option. As a result about 250 of the 285 respondents gave them. A question, asking if they wished to be informed about the result of the survey, was also included in this letter. When the overall result of the data analysis was completed in 2004, this was sent as a website page to each respondent by e-mail using a 'bcc' (blind carbon copy) function. A letter was also sent to respondents by email asking about a possibility of accepting an interview. Unfortunately there were a large number of returned e-mails due to changes of respondents' e-mail addresses. The first group of 15 follow-up interviews included 3 respondents who accepted interviews in Japan, and 12 interviewed in London, Cambridge, Manchester, Reading or Oxford. This stage closely related to a random sampling strategy eliciting more voluntary participation from those who both offered and kept the same e-mail address. However, at this stage, there were very few male respondents in this initial group.

Stage 2

In order to ensure representativeness of the samples of participants for further interviews, the next step was to identify different types of informants' variables needed other than those of the self-nominated interviewees' group formed at stage 1. For example, more male interviewees who were in the twenties and studying Science were needed. In this respect the sampling strategy can be called optimum variation sampling, which involves purposefully picking a necessary and possible range of variation on dimensions of interest. Variables for sample respondents were chosen at this stage to be

age, gender, field of study, level of study, level of English, to be considered in relation to the mean stress scores. Using email contact, as well as telephone calls, a message was sent to each key person of the stage 1 group in various locations in the UK asking them to introduce any other Japanese students they knew who were from the target categories and who were willing and able to accept an interview. This led to a further 12 participants and, as a result, 27 candidates were finally chosen for phase II interviews. There were 19 (70%) female and 8 (30 %) male interviewees. Their profiles are given in section 11.3. (Table 11.1)

(b) The interview agenda

Interviewing after the main questionnaire survey was beneficial in obtaining valuable in-depth qualitative data in order to have a better understanding of the target phenomenon both verbally and holistically.

The agenda for this follow-up interviewing was designed with careful consideration about the conclusions and the limitations of the preceding two sets of data. Six topics were chosen, each containing two questions, so that twelve questions in total were arranged in a semi-structured, less formal, way. Most of these questions were open-ended and aimed at eliciting interviewees' recollections and perceptions about their own experiences of stress during their stay in the UK. The 6 topics chosen for the interview agenda were:

I. Individual stress factors
II. Individual coping strategies
III. The degree of stress in relation to time factors using a stress / time graph.
IV. Evaluation / Comparisons of problems
V. Summary of the overall experience of studying in the UK.
VI. Advice to future students and UKHE institutions.

The interview questions are shown in Appendix IV. Appendix V shows first the additional stress time graphs of three students who were group representatives (1), and then those of all 27 students (2). A table then gives reasons for peak stress shown on the graphs (3).

These stress/time graphs (topic ii) are worth special attention since, unlike other interview questions, they invited respondents to contemplate their own experiences subjectively at the time of occurrence of each hardship and difficulty. The interviewees were asked to draw a graph of stressful feelings, throughout their course/study period, using a provided format. This appears to be a unique and original question style not discussed at all in most of the common methodological references. Although it depends on an informant's subjective judgment, this enabled the interviewees to reflect upon their experiences across the time span of their courses.

In order to facilitate the interviewees' answers, when drawing a graph, the interviewer first gave a short instruction in Japanese, a translation of which follows:

'I would like you to draw a stress graph of your overseas study experience. Please understand that the term 'stress' is defined as 'a mismatch' between yourself and the environment including both the study campus and your living place in the UK. Using your memory and overall recognition please assess the degree of your stress levels throughout the study period measuring levels between 1 and 5. Please choose level 1 when you think that you were in a most relaxed, almost stress-free condition. Please start the stress line when you first began the course, including your pre-sessional course, and finish the graph at the end of your course or at the present time if you have not yet finished it.'

Reasons for upward or downward stress lines and for turning points were explained to the interviewer by the students, at the same time as drawing the line, and these were briefly annotated to record the source of the stress. It was important to explain the definition of the term 'stress' as 'mismatch' because this term has a neutral connotation irrespective of how the feeling of stress between the respondent and the environment was caused.

(c) Interview methods used and other arrangements

The interviews were carried out in the Japanese language, which helped in establishing comfortable relationships between the researcher and interviewees, and ensured that the interview session could not be affected by language-oriented communication difficulties. There was, of course, a problem of accurate translation involved in this decision.

Nevertheless there was at least consistency since there was only one person with responsibility for this.

Twenty-four of the interviews were carried out in the UK, either at the interviewee's house, campus, or in a quiet cafeteria. The actual locations of interviewing were in London (8), Manchester (5), Reading (4), Oxford (4) and Cambridge (3). Three interviews were conducted in Japan (Nagano and Tokyo) to meet the request of interviewees. All interviews were tape-recorded, with the interviewees' consent, and the length of each interview was about one hour.

(d) Ethical issues - confidentiality and anonymity

It was important to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants, in a piece of social research, both for the sake of an individual's privacy and also to prevent any harm ensuing from their research participation. Therefore coding numbers and pseudonyms were adopted in order to protect the anonymity of each participant, and institution names were also always withheld. The interviewees were assured that their names and their study institutions would not be revealed in the survey report.

11.2.2. Sampling issues

(a) Sample size

In determining the sample size the availability of samples took priority as long as variables did not show undue bias. Consequently, the net result of the search was that the 27 interviews conducted were equivalent to about 10 % of the size of questionnaire respondents. (285) There was a concern that this was too many for the task of in-depth analysis. However during the process of data sorting, such as installing stress graphs into computer files and transcribing the tape-recorded interview data, it turned out that it might well be best to divide the 27 individuals into 7 groups depending on variables related to course level, age and/or study field. This way it was possible to choose representatives for detailed study from 7 groups of different variable combinations, which reflected the make-up of the respondents to the questionnaire, and as nearly as possible, the profile of Japanese students registered at HEIs in the UK. The basis of in-depth analysis was to describe 7 cases in detail. However, from time to time, quotations

from the remarks of other interviewees have been included, when they were particularly illuminating, in order to enrich analysis about students' experiences.

(b) The Justification for sampling

In qualitative research it is important for a researcher to see each individual as a unique being. The 27 interviewees had 27 different stories to tell. The more the samples that were obtained, the more the validity of the data analysis would increase. According to Cohen and Manion (1994):

'One way of validating interview measures is to compare the interview measure with another measure that has already been shown to be valid. This kind of comparison is known as 'convergent validity'. If the two measures agree, it can be assumed that the validity of the interview is comparable with the proven validity of the other measure.' (P.281)

In this research it was possible to compare three sets of data in order to achieve this 'convergent validity'.

Once variables for sampling had been decided, this determined the minimum number of students to be chosen. Choosing gender alone as one variable, for example, meant that at least two informants were needed. If the level of study is added to the first variable, then at least six informants were necessary since three possibilities (BA, MA and PhD levels) existed for the two variables (male and female). Furthermore if the researcher wished to combine 3 fields of study by using a third variable, then the number needed increased to 18 students. (6 x 3)

In fact there were several informants sharing the same variables, for example 3 female PhD students all studying Linguistics. It seemed more beneficial to have more than one in such a category, since there were then more possibilities of finding what and how other factors influence each student in the same variable group. This means, for example, that if you interview two female MA students who are both in their thirties and specialising in English language teaching studies then there is the added possibility of considering any significant differences between them.

(c) Strengths and weaknesses

'The Stress Graph', which was the second interview item, turned out to be very effective and productive for the purpose of finding out more about students' stress factors as well as their change in stress level over the whole period of their stay in the UK. The data enabled visual comparison of stress levels among all the samples, as well as within one person's history. Above all, it was the story attached to the graph that was important for a clearer understanding of the way stress was perceived to affect an individual student.

All interviewees had responded to the main questionnaire previously, so that they were well aware of the purpose and areas of inquiry. Newly recruited research participants were asked to fill in the questionnaire before their interviews. Thus it was also possible to obtain a further insight into their experiences of stress, using their questionnaire data and comparing this with their interview replies.

One of the weaknesses of this kind of research is that it depends on an informant's memory, and sometimes this is not precise. In this sense, the reliability of the data is subjective and impaired. It is true that there is no objective measure to verify informants' judgments about stress degrees. Therefore the data must be interpreted as being meaningful within each informant's perception. If one informant said that their stress level was 4 at the start of a course and another said their initial stress was 2, this did not provide any objective criteria for comparison. What is more important here is why this level was chosen by each student and how different this was when compared with their stress levels at other times.

Cohen and Manion (1994) wrote that 'In proportion to the extent to which 'reliability' is enhanced by rationalization, 'validity' would decrease.' They explained:

'The main purpose of using an interview in research is that it is believed that, in an interpersonal encounter, people are more likely to disclose aspects of themselves, their thoughts, their feelings and values, than they would in a less human situation. At least for some purposes, it is necessary to generate a kind of conversation in which the 'respondent' feels at ease. In other words, the distinctively human element, in the interview, is necessary for its 'validity'. The more the interviewer becomes rational,

calculating, and detached, the less likely the interview is to be perceived as a friendly transaction, and the more calculated the response also is likely to be.' (p.282)

So the interviews in this research were conducted in a less-formal way and the researcher allowed herself to ask questions about aspects that particularly puzzled her in each interviewee's perceptions. The researcher's total understanding was therefore prioritized, during each interview, especially in order to discover why, when and how an informant experienced a particular form of stress during their course of study.

However, since the main emphasis of this phase of the research was more on finding out factors of stress, questions about contents of stressful feelings could not be investigated in detail. Answers about coping strategies were rather brief, more or less like 'I asked help from others' or 'I just did it or I had no option'. Understanding their coping strategies was certainly easier once their problems had been fully identified.

(d) The plan for analysis

In his book about content analysis, Neuendorf (2002) wrote that 'there are many forms of analysis – from frivolous to seminal – that may be applied to the human production of messages'. (p.4) He listed various methods of message analysis in qualitative research, using Hijmans's typology. They are 'rhetorical analysis', 'narrative analysis', 'discourse analysis', 'structuralist or semiotic analysis', 'interpretative analysis', 'conversation analysis', 'critical analysis' and 'normative analysis'. Out of these alternatives this research through interview appears to be best described as 'interpretative analysis', about which Neuendorf wrote:

'Interpretative Analysis - The focus of this technique is on the formation of theory from the observation of messages and the coding of those messages. With its roots in social scientific inquiry, it involves theoretical sampling; analytical categories; cumulative, comparative analysis; and the formulation of types of conceptual categories. The methodology is clearly spelled out, but it differs from scientific inquiry in its wholly qualitative nature and its cumulative process, whereby the analyst is in a constant state of discovery and revision. The researcher is assumed to be a competent observer.' (p.6)

This state of discovery and revision certainly describes well the experience of this

researcher when carrying out the interviews.

11.3. The Data from seven groups of interviewees

The 27 interviewees were divided into seven groups. The first three groups (I, II and III) included 10 students enrolled on BA courses, who were divided into 3 groups by age and field of study. Group I comprised students who were all in their late twenties, three of whom were studying Art and the mean stress level of this group established from the questionnaire was 2.48. Group II also comprised four students who were all in their early twenties and were studying for a B.A. in Social Studies after taking Foundation courses. All were currently in the middle of their courses with a mean stress score of 3.10, which was the highest mean of all seven groups. Group III had just two students, who had been in England for more than seven years, taking GCSE, A-level and university degree examinations. They were both male students in their early twenties and their mean group stress score was the lowest of all 7 groups. (2.06)

Group IV and V comprised eight students on MA courses reading Humanities and Social Sciences. Group IV had four older students, from the late thirties to the late sixties, with a mean group stress score of 2.94, whilst Group V had four female students, with ages from 26 to 40, who were all in the middle of courses and following the same field of study (TESOL), with a mean group stress score of 3.

Group VI and VII comprised nine students on PhD courses. Group VI had four female students, aged from 29 to 45, all studying Linguistics with an average group stress score of 2.72. Group VII had three male and two female students, aged from 29 to 40 and studying various subjects, with a mean group stress score of 2.48.

This information about the composition of the sample groups is summarised in the following table. (11.1)

Table 11.1. The composition and personal factors of the seven focus groups of interviewees

Group (n)	Course level	Gender	Age range	Field of study	Mean Stress Level	
I (4)	BA (10)	3 f, 1 m	26-32	3 Art, 1 Peace Studies	2.48	2.55
II (4)		3 f, 1 m	22-23	Business, Development, Child-Education, Psychology, Sports Rehabilitation	3.10	
III (2)		2 m	21-25	1 Architecture, 1 Engineering	2.06	
IV (4)	MA (8)	3 f, 1 m	35-69	2 Language Teaching 1 History, 1 Economics	2.94	2.97
V (4)		4 f	32-40	4 TESOL	3	
VI (4)	PhD (9)	4 f	30-45	4 Linguistics	2.72	2.6
VII(5)		2 f, 3 m	29-40	Art, English Literature Anthropology, Engineering, Urban-Design	2.48	

All 27 interviewees' stress graphs of these 7 groups are shown in Appendix V. One student's stress graph from each group is considered in detail in this chapter, together with results of interviews and interpretation. The criterion used to choose one student's graph from each group was to select the one that had the most frequent changes or curves, regardless of stress levels or any other factors like age, level of English or overseas experience. The more zigzag in the stress graph, the more likely it was that there would be more varied stress factors to consider. Possibly the student also had clearer memories of the past than others. However, interview data and information from other stress graphs in each group are quoted, whenever this helps to enrich descriptions, in order to have a deeper understanding of the whole picture. As in the previous chapter, all statements by respondents quoted here were translated into English by the researcher and students' statements are shown in italics in order to put emphasis on their direct voice.

11.3.1. Group I

This had 4 students, all in their late twenties, and taking B.A. courses. Three studied Art at the same institution in London and had similar average stress scores between 2.17 and 2.27. The fourth student Maki (4) studied Social Sciences with a stress level of 3.29. The graphs drawn by this group of students showed that the highest stress level was at the end of their courses, except for Shigeo (2), who was the youngest male student in this group, with the lowest stress score (2.17), even though his level of English was not as high as other three. He had studied Architecture at a Japanese university and this was his second BA. He said that he was very happy, having found what he wanted to do in his new study field (Jewellery Design), and he commented that *Stress is something that you can control within yourself. It depends on your mind, doesn't it?* However, unlike the others, he had not yet faced the graduation paper, the hardest point of his work-load, while all the other three interviewees in this group showed a stress peak at the time of finishing their courses. This interpretation is supported by the fact that his academic stress score was already the highest in the three areas of experiences, unlike two other female Art students who both had their highest stress score in the socio-cultural experience area.

The focused interviewee from this group was Maki (4) since her two stress graphs showed the most frequent ups and downs in the group. The following table (11.2) shows the brief profiles and stress data of the four students in Group I. Maki's (4) data are shown in bold type.

Table 11.2. Personal factors of Group I interviewees

Code	Gen-der	Age	Overseas trips	Level	Field	Eng. group level	Previous study exp. + Pre-sessional course	Job. exp . (Number of years)
1 Seiko	f	26	More than 5 times	F+BA	Jewel. Design	3	y+n	y(3)
2 Shigeo	m	26	5	F+BA	Jewel. Design	2	n+n	n
3 Taeko	f	27	5	B+MA	Graphic Design	3	y+n	y(3.5)
4 Maki	**f**	**30**	**2**	**F+BA**	**Peace Studies**	**3**	**y+n**	**y(5)**

N.B. In 'Previous study experiences + Pre-sessional course experience: 'y' is used for yes and 'n' for no experience. The English grade was grouped into 5 levels from the lowest 1 to the highest 5. (See Table 8.11)

Code	Academic stress mean	English stress mean	Socio-cult. stress mean	Overall stress mean	Study-period (years)
1 Seiko	2.3	1.8	2.5	2.21	4 yrs. (01-05)
2 Shigeo	2.5	2.3	1.7	2.17	3 yrs (02-05)
3 Taeko	1.9	1.9	3	2.27	5 yrs (00-05)
4 Maki	**3.8**	**3.1**	**2.9**	**3.29**	**5 yrs (97-02)**

4 (Maki)

Maki's stress graphs show two stages of her study period, the first for language learning and a Foundation course in London (a), and the second for her BA course in the North of England (b).

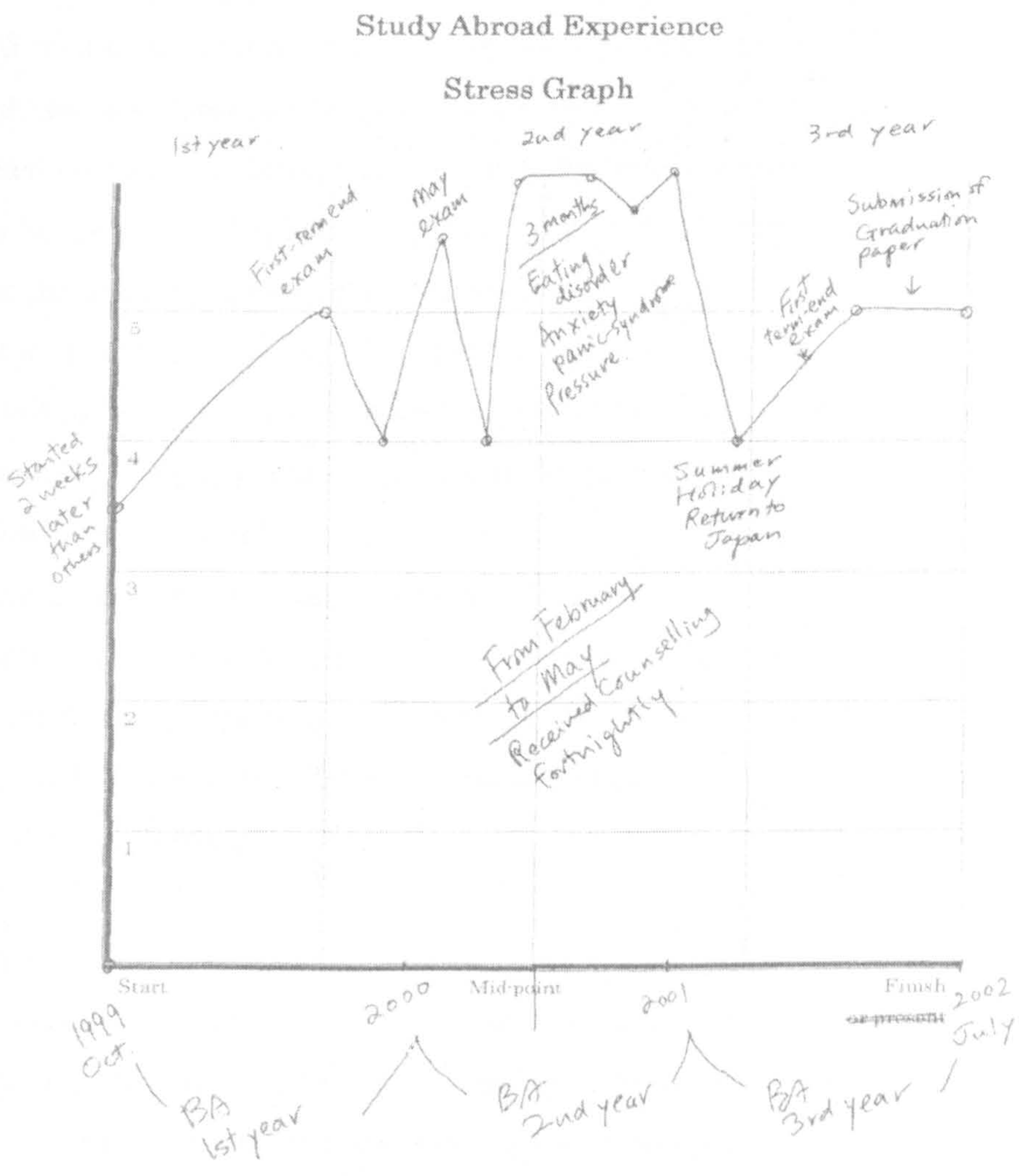
The four stress peaks of her graph (a), shown in Appendix V, were all related to Maki's

examinations such as the Cambridge First Certificate Test, IELTS (gaining a score of 5), the first term-end exam and the last one of the Foundation course together with IELTS (score of 6.5). At the third peak, she said that she was at the top of the class and 'did not want to be defeated' by any of her classmates.

Maki's statement about her BA period shown in graph (b) (Graph 11.1 below) revealed severe anxieties. Following this is part of her statement from the interview.

11.1. Stress / time graph (b) for Maki (Group I)

MK211 – 2



'In the winter of 1999 I became depressed. Partly the weather mattered. I was feeling very downcast. But I did not cancel my lessons. ...After the first year term-end exam my feeling was slightly more settled. In the beginning of my second year, I think my stress level was about 4.5. Soon afterwards I lost about 8 kilograms in weight, also feeling a pressure because I had borrowed money from my parents. I did not want to let them down by my poor study record. My memory of childhood family problems suddenly returned at this time, which made me suffer from eating disorders and anxiety syndromes. I could control myself when outside, but returned home to feel desperate again. This lasted about three months. Throughout the first half of the second year my suffering was indeed severe.'

However, Maki sought help from a counsellor when she was distressed, after advice both from a personal tutor at her school who was worried about the decline in her study record, and also from her landlady who happened to be a church minister's wife. She received counselling fortnightly, for 3 months, in the second year of her BA course in Peace Studies. This explains the period of high stress, shown in Graph11.1 (b) above, where she drew the graph higher than the maximum scale 5 to emphasize her serious plight at this time. However, she also said that she was greatly helped by her landlady who talked with her one afternoon every week. She mentioned that talking to a counsellor in English was not a disadvantage, because she could describe her own childhood family problems using simple English. If she had spoken in her native language, Japanese, it would have been too complicated and other factors would have prevented her from revealing her inner problems. This was interesting because some other students complained of an inability to explain, in English, their symptoms of illness to hospital staff. Having a trained counsellor with time to listen presumably made all the difference.

In this respect Maki's case was unique amongst all samples of this research. From the survey result (Question Part 1-C3) it was found that Japanese students rarely sought help from counsellors. Asked about the person to consult when having problems, only three out of all 285 survey respondents chose 'counsellor' for socio-cultural problems, only two for English language problems, and none for academic ones. In this question there were 9 options for a person to consult, friend, teacher, family etc., and a counsellor was chosen the least. In 2002, Maki chose 'landlady' as her answer to the question 'Whom do you consult when having problems?' for two areas of problems (language

and socio-cultural). When the interviewer mentioned the overall survey results to her at the time of her interview, she agreed at once, saying '*Yes, it is true because there is a bias against counselling among Japanese.*' In Japanese schools, counselling is relatively new and usually a school nurse takes on the role of a counsellor. This might have been a reason for this tendency not to seek a counsellor's help. Counselling is probably much more acceptable in an individualistic society, whilst there are other ways of seeking help in a high-context, group-oriented country like Japan, where family ties are often more important. The Japanese Parliament passed a law designating national qualifications for counsellors in June 2005 and this may help in changing Japanese students' opinion about counsellors in the future.

Another important finding from Maki's stress graph is that, although she scored her mean stress as 3.29 in her questionnaire in 2002, the average level of her stress graph (especially b) drawn in 2005 was well over 4 and almost as high as 5. This is perhaps because overall stressful feelings can better be expressed by replies to face-to-face interview questions than to categorically framed survey questions. Also because low stress in a number of areas masked the high stress revealed by her stress/graph when a stress mean score was calculated. This is a strong reason for using a stress/time graph whenever possible to better understand individual problems.

After leaving a senior high school Maki entered the Japanese Defence Army for five years. The topic for a graduation project to finish her Foundation course was about 'the death penalty', and her BA thesis was about 'Universal Human Rights'. She then smiled and said '*I like heavy, serious subjects!*.'

When Maki was asked in the interview to give her advice to fellow Japanese students who will go abroad for study in the future, she said: '*Overseas study is not a time to play. What is important is whether you have a goal that you will never abandon. I had a strong feeling about it. I was very interested in human rights and, since my childhood, I wanted to do something to contribute to international cooperation. One should also try one's best to blend in with the life on the spot.*'

11.3.2. Group II

Group II was a very homogeneous one. All four students were 22 or 23 years of age, had finished secondary education in Japan and had come to the UK to study for a B.A. in Social Sciences. They had fairly similar mean stress levels (2.71 to 3.38). One minor difference is that Yukari (6) had no previous overseas experience. However, the reason why her overall stress score (2.71) was the lowest of this group may be partly because she had good family support due to her father's job transfer to the UK. She had the lowest stress score in all three areas of difficulty. In addition, she chose the highest satisfaction level (5) for her own study experience in the UK. She expressed, more articulately than the others, her positive view of her study experience, saying that '*I have changed a great deal myself and became very positive about doing new things. After I met a Korean boyfriend, I started to learn the Korean language and went to Korea for a summer holiday. This relationship finished but I am thinking of choosing a Japan-Korea relationship issue for my graduation paper.*'

The unique feature of this group is that all four young interviewees talked about meeting and/or separating from boy-friends or girl-friends, which greatly affected their stress levels. The stress graphs of this group showed many steep and sudden jumps between the extreme levels of 1 and 5. This feature was remarkable when compared with the graphs of any other group. This may have been due to their relatively young age. The main survey also showed that younger students had significantly higher stress levels caused by 'gossiping among Japanese' and 'the difficulty of gaining information from libraries'. It is of course true that younger students generally have more developmental problems and need to learn much more than academic knowledge from their overseas study experiences.

The following table (11.3.) shows profiles and stress scores of students in Group II. Etsuko (5), shown in bold style, is the student from this group chosen for special attention.

Table.11.3. Personal factors of Group II interviewees

Code	Gen-der	Age	Over-seas trips	Course level	Field of study	Engl. group level	Previous Stud.exp. +Pre-session	Job.exp (n of yrs)
5 Etsuko	**f**	**23**	**5**	**Ls+F+B**	**Psychol.**	**3**	**y+y**	**N0**
6 Yukari	f	23	0	F+F+B	Develop.	N.I.	n+y	No
7 Rie	f	23	5	Ls+F+B	Business	3	y+y	Yes (1.5)
8 Takeshi	m	22	4	F+B	Sports.Re-hab.	2	y+y	No

N.B. In 'Previous study experiences + Pre-sessional course experience: 'y' is used for yes and 'n' for no experience. The English grade was grouped into 5 levels from the lowest 1 to the highest 5. (See Table 8.11) N.I. = 'No information available'

Code	Academic stress mean	English stress mean	Socio-cult. stress mean	Overall Stress Mean	Study period (years)
5 Etsuko	**3.6**	**3.2**	**3.4**	**3.38**	**5 yrs. (01-06)**
6 Yukari	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.71	5 yrs. (01-06)
7 Rie	3.4	2.8	3.2	3.10	4 yrs. (02-06)
8 Takeshi	2.9	3.8	2.9	3.23	4 yrs. (02-06)

Etsuko (5)

Etsuko started her study at a language school in the UK, at the age of 19, in May 2001 when she had a high stress level of 5. She said:

'At the beginning it was very tough. It was ghastly. The surrounding circumstances were also dreadful. I was lost among those around me including many Japanese Art

student. Soon, gossiping began. I was all alone at first. Human relationships engulfed me. At that time my IELTS was only 5 and nearly all my best efforts were just to try to keep up with my English.'

Later in the interview she again mentioned gossiping. '*I did not know any of those who gossiped about me. I wondered why they wanted to be bothered with talking about me.*' It is, of course, wrong to say that gossiping is typical of Japanese culture but there are certain social circumstances, or human situations, that are prone to produce more gossipy conversations. When Japanese students form a close and separate sub-group among international students they tend to have more of these gossipy concerns. One reason that Japanese students keep to their own sub-group is no doubt owing to their common culture and language. The younger students tend to be the most dependent on close national relationships. It is clearly easier for students, with high English competence, to have wider options of making friends from diverse backgrounds.

When Etsuko finished her secondary education she persuaded her parents to allow her the opportunity to study abroad. Her parents agreed but only for a one year language course. When this year finished she spent '*every day*' trying very hard to persuade her parents to allow further study in the UK. Their agreement gave Etsuko a strong sense of obligation to succeed. Another motivation Etsuko had for her overseas study was that she had a keen interest in a pop group singer for whose sake she was ready to devote her life! He was in an American group but, for the sake of her safety, her parents only accepted study in the UK. When asked again about what was the greatest difficulty in her study experiences, she said, '*It was probably my English. If it had been better, things would have been a lot easier.*' Her advice to future Japanese students was to study English as much as possible, whilst in Japan, which she had not been able to do. For Etsuko the best thing, about her study in the UK, was that she could meet a variety of people. She admitted that she did not have the courage to join discussions during the class lesson. However her English level had improved mainly because of the help of friends, who were the most important supportive factor, in enabling her to cope with stress.

During the first year of her language course she met a boyfriend and her stress level went down to 1. At the end of the course she did not want to go back to Japan, which caused her stressful feelings to go up to the extreme level of 5. This was her second

peak. The third peak was, in the middle of her Foundation course, when she separated from her boyfriend. In September 2003 she made a new boyfriend, a Taiwanese student, and her stress again went down to level 1. When they started living together, she began to feel frustrated by the difficulty of living with a student boyfriend. Domestic work like cleaning, washing and cooking was not fairly divided, and her stress level rose because she could not cope. At the end of 2003 she ended this relationship, which reduced her stress level to 2. When her Foundation course finished, she achieved IELTS 6.5. She said that her stress from academic difficulties since that time remained at level 5. At the time of the interview (March 2005), she rated her stress at 3.5, but thought it was likely to go up soon because term-end examinations and coursework deadlines were then approaching and she was still having some problems about sharing accommodation with 5 other people including 3 Japanese.

When looking at what Etsuko said in the interview and the information given by the graph she drew, it seems that many of her high stress levels relate to factors in her social life. This is probably a reflection of factors such as age, sexuality and personality just as much, if not more, than nationality.

All the other three interviewees in this group had both enjoyed and suffered from having boyfriends and girlfriends, which also affected their stress levels in both directions. This was, of course, part of their growing process as well as their learning process in their overseas study experiences.

This group had the highest average stress score (3.10) of all groups. This can probably be explained by a combination of three factors. They had only secondary level education in Japan. All were reading social studies which involve extensive use of language, and all had English levels lower than IELTS 7, whilst most of their classmates were native speakers. In comparison with Group I students, who had fewer 'language dependent' subjects of study and three of whom had finished tertiary education in Japan, it is clear to see reasons for their higher average stress level.

Etsuko's (5) graph follows. (11.2)

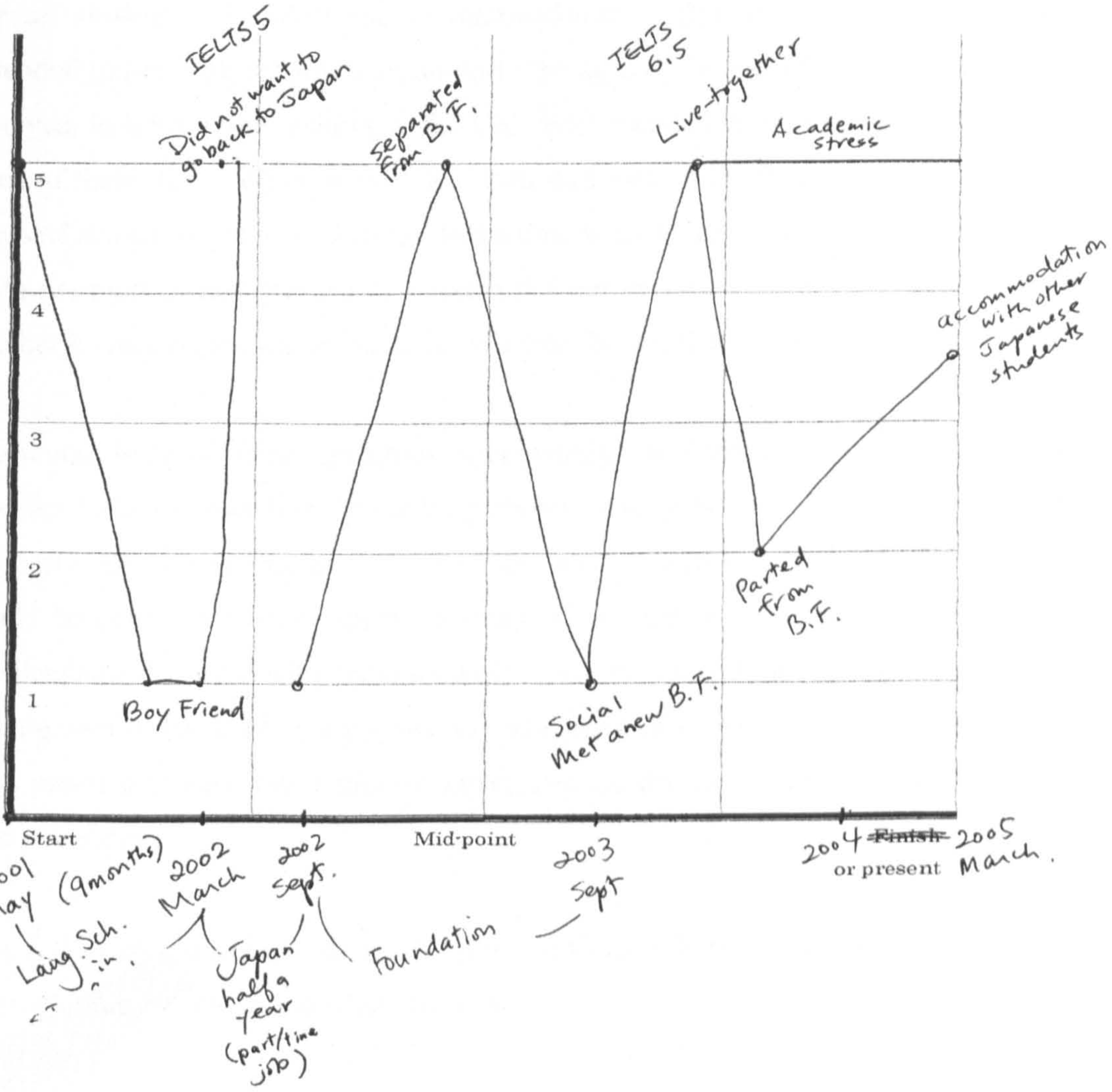
Graph 11.2. Stress / time graph for Etsuko (Group II)

15

EKX10

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



11.3.3. Group III

The two male students in Group III, both in their early twenties, had stayed in the UK for almost one third of their lives, taking GCSE, A-levels and a Foundation university course. Their overall mean stress scores were found to be very low (2.13, 2.00), but that did not mean they were having stress-free lives. They apparently had developed considerable skills for acculturation and adjustment to cope with cross-cultural differences and new academic skills. Jiro (9) said that '*stress naturally goes up higher when examination dates and coursework deadlines approach. I am sure it is the same for all students, whether home or international.*' Before coming to the UK they attended junior high school in Japan up to the ages of 14 and 15. Yuuta(10) had spent one year in USA before coming to the UK. Both recalled their miserable feelings at the start of their study period in the UK. Yuta said that on his first day in the UK he felt himself at a complete loss. Jiro recalled a time when he had cried, after a telephone talk with his mother, not because of missing her but because of feeling comforted by his mother's voice on the telephone as he was then feeling lonely and anxious.

However, both of them somehow successfully survived their various educational courses in more than three schools, probably mainly because of their secure family support. Yuuta said that he was sure there was something in his family heritage that could be called 'a frontier spirit' as many of his family members were fond of new challenges even those with some hardships. He mentioned that his grandparents were immigrants in the USA, his parents' various social activities, including the Presidency of a prefectural vets' association in Japan, and the diverse courses of his two brothers and two sisters.

The following table (11.4) shows the group profiles followed by a detailed study of Jiro (9) including a stress graph which he drew.

Table.11.4. Personal factors of Group III interviewees

Code	Gen-der	Age	O'seas trips	Level	Field of study	Engl. group level	Previous study exp+ Pre. session	Job (yrs)
9 Jiro	**m**	**21**	**5**	**L+G+A+B**	**Architec.**	**3**	**y+y**	**n**
10 Yuta	m	25	5	Ls+G+A+B+M	Engin.	N.I.	y+y	n

N.B. In 'Previous study experiences + Pre-sessional course experience: 'y' is used for yes and 'n' for no experience. The English grade was grouped into 5 levels from the lowest 1 to the highest 5. (See Table 8.11) N.I. = No information available.

Code	Academic stress mean	English stress mean	Socio- cultural stress mean	Overall Stress Mean	Study period (years)
9 Jiro	**2.2**	**2.4**	**1.8**	**2.13**	**7 yrs (98-05)**
10 Yuta	2.6	1.8	1.6	2.00	8 yrs (97-05)

Jiro (9)

Jiro's family owns a company making machines used in Japanese railway stations. Jiro is the second of three sons and partly because of this, according to Jiro, his parents did not worry much about him being away from home in the UK when he was 13 and spent one month's summer holiday in Wales. Unlike so-called '*Kyouiku mama*' (education-obsessed mums) or '*Kahogo'* (over-protecting) parents, which have been very common in Japanese families since the 1970's, Jiro said that his mother took the view that it was all right as long as her son was still alive. At the age of 14, in his second year of junior high school, he made up his own mind to come to the UK for study. His mother willingly, and his father reluctantly, approved this. He stayed in a private study centre in Wales for 10 months and then moved to a secondary boarding school in Mid-England. After taking GCSE and A-level examinations he joined a city university to read Architecture.

Graph 11.3. Stress / time graph for Jiro (Group III)

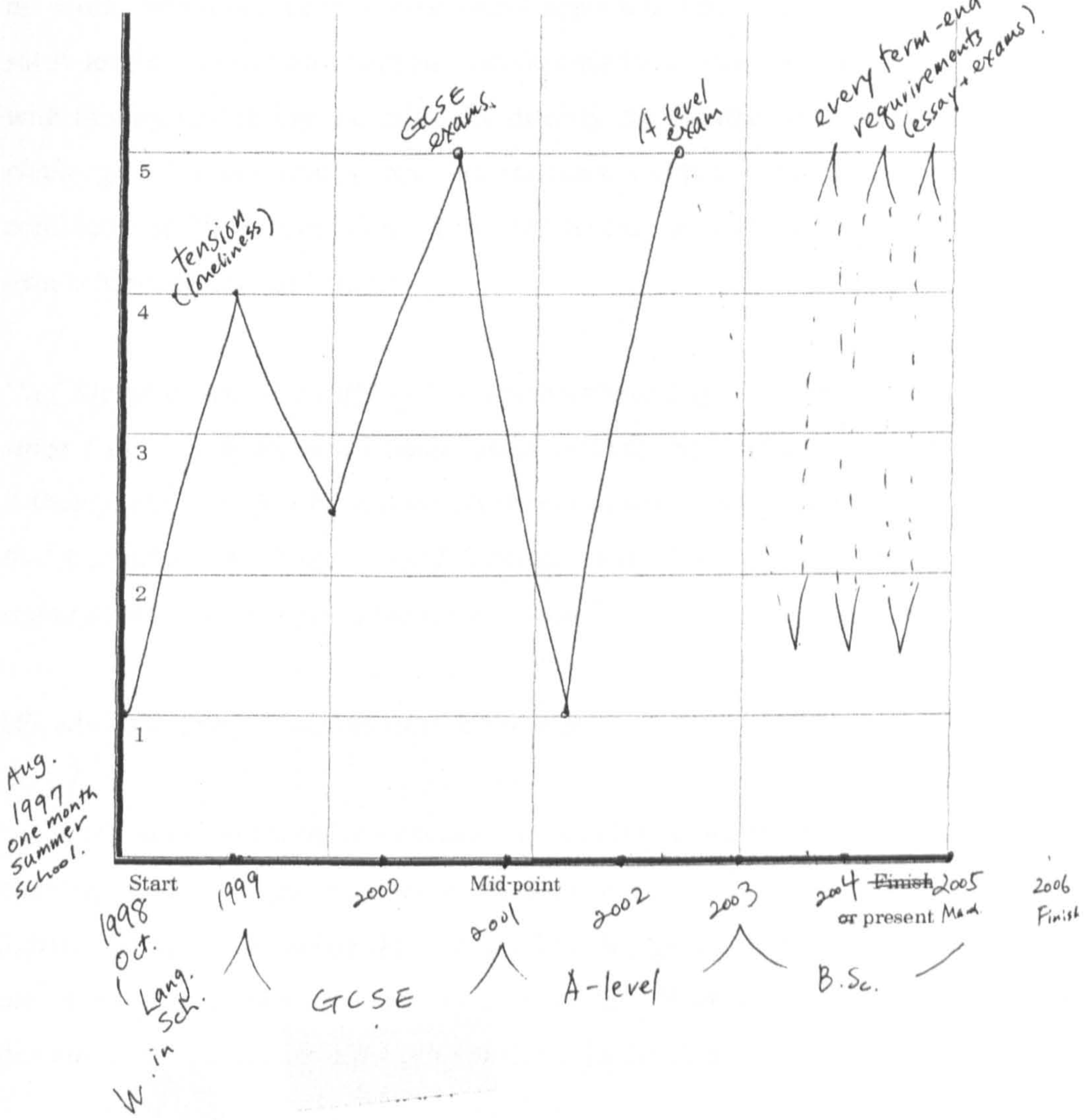
Code No. 9

9

JIX2

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



Jiro said that his skills in adjusting to UK society and culture had improved greatly, since there had been no other option but to adjust, when he had been transferred from place to place for every Easter holiday. When his English was not good enough to communicate with friends in his boarding school, he tried to win their attention by showing his 'unique character' instead of through language exchange. This demonstrated his outgoing personality. Jiro was chairman of the Japanese students' society in his university, which showed his leadership qualities.

At university his stress reached its highest peak every fortnight, when he had to submit his work. When end of term assessment approached his stress was as high as when he sat A-levels. His overall comment was that academic stress was the severest. He coped with this by just facing the difficulty directly, saying that '*it is no good if you do not challenge.*' He said that he had become more independent and much better at having confidence in his own opinions. However, he only awarded himself '5 out of 10' for his own achievements, explaining:

'*No! My effort was not sufficient. Conversational English is not a problem for me, but since I did not learn much about essay writing, my evaluation is only 5 out of 10. Although the work has been hard, there was always some compromise within myself so that I could not do things to my full satisfaction. However, I do not have the slightest regret about having come to the UK for study.*'

His advice to fellow students from Japan was:

'*Even if you are not sure, you should still decide to come to the UK for study. I like my country, Japan. I hope those future students from Japan will know what is good about Japan, but they will realise this better when they go abroad. I realised how grateful I am to my own family after I came to the UK. What is good about the UK is that communication is easier, although I am also fond of Japanese indirect language.*'

11.3.4. Group IV

This group comprised 4 older students, with ages from the late thirties to the late sixties, all on M.A. courses. Their average stress score was 2.94, the third highest of all seven groups. One-year Master's courses had the highest stress scores in the survey, probably because of the short period of time involved. The interview data from this group showed how academic, language and socio-cultural factors were all inter-related in causing stressful feelings.

All four had finished their university courses and had had extensive work experience in Japan (from 9 to 35 years). Three of the four were involved in language teaching and learning (English and Japanese), while Kiyoshi (14), the only male student of this group, studied Economics. He had however been involved in a teaching career in the evenings and at the week-end at a *juku* (private preparatory school in Japan) for 12 years before coming to the UK. Kiyoshi studied at first, in a pre-session course, in a university in London and then moved to a Diploma followed by an MA course. He applied for an MA course from the start but was rejected because his English level was not good enough. This may partly explain why his stress score was so high (3.44).

Another common feature of this group was that the patterns of stress graphs had all relatively horizontal lines showing few turnings, with mainly slight curves. This was a clear contrast to the graphs drawn by younger students and suggested that there may be some difference of patterns between the younger and the older generations in evaluating their experiences. It could be that 'memory plays tricks' as one grows older or that only with maturity can people see the past in its true perspective!

The Table 11.5 below summarises the profiles of Group IV. The focused student's data, Miwa (11), is shown in bold style. Miwa's graph was chosen to represent this group because her first graph showed the most frequent turnings, although her second graph showed a very low stress, almost a horizontal line. This will be considered later when dealing with her account in detail. However, two other interviewees' data will be considered here first - 12 (Yukiko) and 13 (Naomi) in order to widen an understanding of how various stress factors are inter-related in this group.

Table11.5. Personal factors of Group IV interviewees

Code	Gen-der	Age	O'seas trips	Level	Field of study	Engl. group level	Previous stud.exp. + Pre-session	Job (years)
11 Miwa	**f**	**36**	**5**	**M+M**	**Ap.Ling. +History**	**3**	**n+y**	**y(9)**
12 Yukiko	f	39	5	Ls+M	Ap.Ling.	5	y+y	y(8)
13 Naomi	f	68	5	M	History	N.I.	y+n	y(35)
14 Kiyoshi	m	35	5	F+D+M	Economics	2	y+n	y(12)

N.B. In 'Previous study experiences + Pre-sessional course experience: 'y' is used for yes and 'n' for no experience. The English grade was grouped into 5 levels from the lowest 1 to the highest 5. (See Table 8.11) N.I. = No information available.

Code	Academic stress mean	Eng. stress mean	Socio-cult. stress mean	Overall Stress Mean	Study period (years)
11 Miwa	**2.6**	**2.7**	**3.3**	**2.83**	**6 yrs (99-05)**
12 Yukiko	2.8	3	2.6	2.77	1 yr (00-01)
13 Naomi	3.4	3.1	1.7	2.71	3yrs (97-98,02-04)
14 Kiyoshi	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.44	3 yrs (03-06)

Yukiko's (12) stress graph showed the only U-curve, out of all 27 interviewees, which was once believed to be a typical pattern for cross-cultural stress experiences. (Lysgaard, 1955) Throughout her one-year MA course she said that all her difficulties and stressful feelings came from language problems. Although her English level was in the highest group, with an IELTS score of over 7.5, she admitted that she could write only one page when native speakers would be able to write five. She also found the amount of reading requirements to be enormous. This shows that language stress can be

experienced by students regardless of their levels of English ability. Yukiko mentioned that she aimed at the highest possible goal since she had paid all the expensive fees from her own precious savings. The first peak of her stress, at the beginning of the course, came from nervousness and anxiety and the second was at the end of the course, due to the effort of writing her dissertation. Yukiko's (12) graph is shown in Appendix V (Code No. 12).

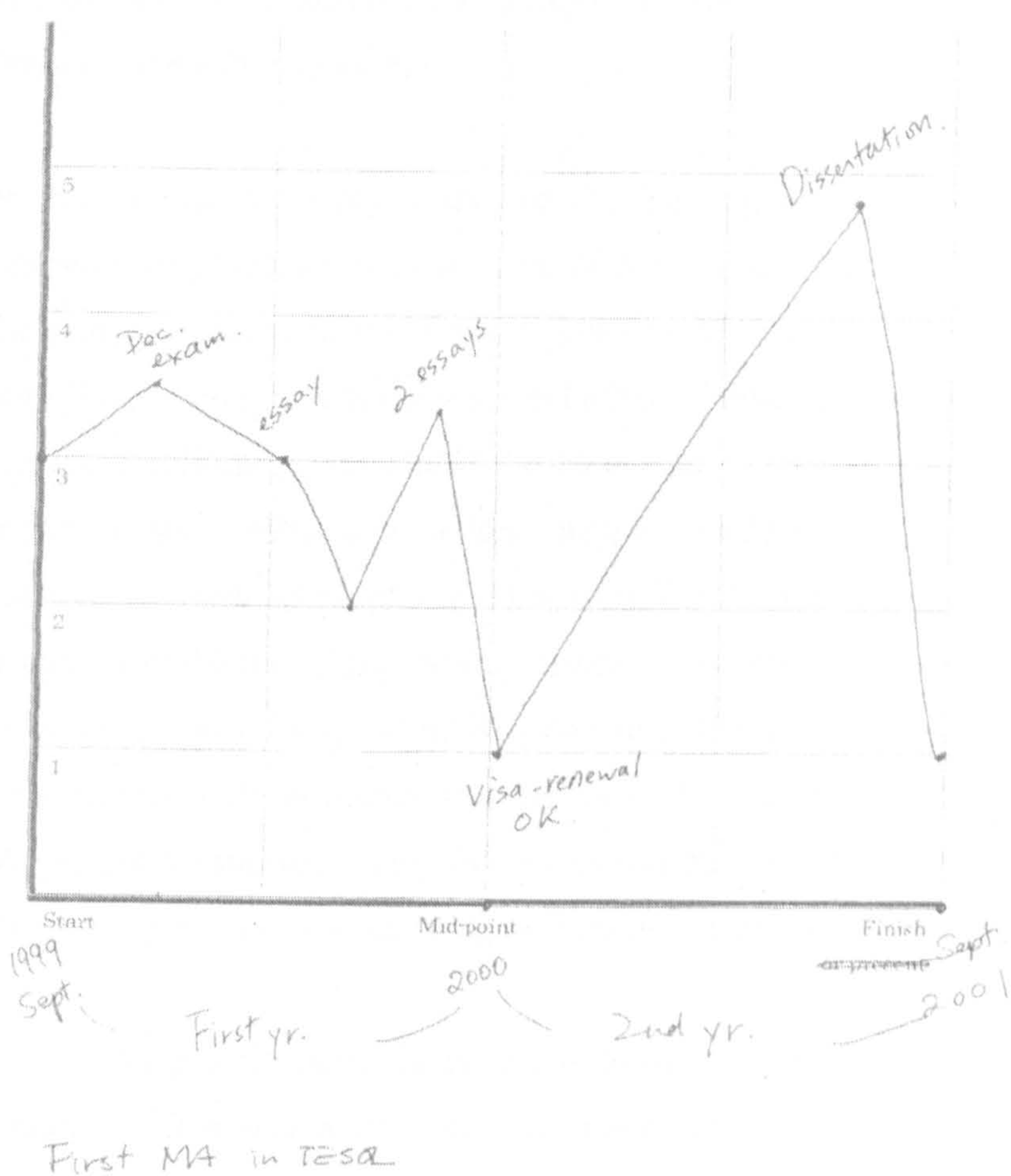
Naomi (13) was the oldest participant both of all the interviewees and also of all survey respondents. Although she had been a teacher of English in a Japanese prefectural senior high school for 35 years, she admitted that she still had difficulties in listening, the fluent use of English, understanding dialects and even understanding certain vocabulary that is used in casual conversations. Like other older students in the main survey, she had the least problems in socio-cultural experiences. In spite of the stressful experience of once having had her handbag stolen, losing her passport and all her bankcards, her severest stress came from writing her dissertation. She said:

'*At the start I was in the dark, with stressful feelings and I only gradually realised all I had to do. My first deadline was to submit a 5000 word essay in September, but I could not achieve this goal and was given a new deadline. Just before Christmas it was very painful, but after Christmas my stress level went down. Then it shot upwards again when I found that the ideas I thought good enough to compile a thesis were inadequate. So I submitted a form requesting an extension and was allowed submission by 5th January. I thought that I would never be able to make the grade but somehow I got a bare pass for my essay and was finally able to graduate.*'

Miwa (11), the representative of this Group IV, started her first MA course in September 1999. Her Graph (11.4) follows:

Graph 11.4. Stress / time graph (a) for Miwa (Group IV)

MM170 — /



After working as a teacher of English at prefectural senior high schools, for 9 years in Japan, she decided to take a course in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at an institution in London. Her stress graph (11.4.a) above showed four high peaks which were all related to either examinations or deadlines for coursework or dissertation. These stressful events were a combination of two areas of difficulty; language and academic. Asked what her hardest experience was, she said that it was:

'To keep up with an enormous amount of reading and writing requirements. There were

so many unknown words including some jargon. Above all else, this language problem caused the severest stress. As time went by I improved and began to take notice of the more casual English conversations.'

Miwa recalled her dreams, at the start of her course, in which she was speaking English. She was sure it was because of her obsession that she felt she had to speak English. After a few years the language of her dream depended on to whom she was speaking. '*Recently*', she said '*I feel much more relaxed. All my worries are now caused only by reasons related to my dissertation.*'

However, her questionnaire result showed that her highest stress area was in socio-cultural experiences, with an average score of 3.3. At the time of the main survey, in which she took part, after she had finished her first MA in 2002, she chose the highest stress score (level 5) for only two events in both academic and language difficulties but for five in socio-cultural events out of the 16 events in each area. These five were 1) handling various socio-cultural procedures such as at a bank, police station, hospital or council office, 2) financial problems, 3) anxiety for the future, 4) a feeling of social isolation and 5) problems of the postal service. At this time she was just about to decide whether to apply for a second MA course in the Teaching of History. She also had serious problems about money and her visa. Her stress graph for the second MA period (Appendix V) showed a very low stress line just between level 1 and 2, but this was likely to go up soon when she faced the pressure to complete her dissertation.

She said that talking with friends, irrespective of their nationality, was the most helpful coping strategy. '*Human contact was always the best way to cope*', she said. This was, in fact, the most frequent response of all coping strategies revealed by the survey.

For Miwa the issue of visa renewal was a serious concern. This was why in her graph (a) her stress went down to the lowest level, at the end of the first year, when she managed to get this renewal. As she wished to stay in the UK for a long time, she deferred her course twice, and even in the year between her two MA courses she paid fees to a language school in London just for the sake of obtaining her visa. In fact there were several other interviewees who mentioned the renewal of visa as an extremely difficult and annoying problem. For example Taeko (3) in Group I said that when she thought about her visa problem her stress level reached the 'ceiling'. Both Seiko (1) in

Group I and Yuta (10) in Group III mentioned the problem of obtaining a visa, since they found a work place after graduation in the UK, when an employer tried to get them a visa but could not do so easily because their qualifications and the types of work did not meet visa requirements.

11.3.5. *Group V*

Group V comprised four female students, all of whom were enrolled on a one-year MA course in Applied Linguistics/TESOL, having had work experience as English teachers in Japanese secondary schools. The average stress score of this group, with students aged from 26 to 40, was 3, the second highest of all 7 groups. The following Table 11.6 summarises their profiles.

Table11.6. Personal factors of Group V interviewees

Code	Gen-der	Age	O'seas trips	Level	Field of study	Engl. group level	Previous stud.experi + pre-session	Job (years)
15 Keiko	f	32	4	M	Apl.Ling.	3	n+y	Y (8)
16 Akane	f	40	5	M	Apl.Ling.	4	n+n	Y(2+13)
17 Masami	**f**	**26**	**5**	**M**	**Apl.Ling.**	**5**	**y+n**	**Y (3)**
18 Chieko	f	35	5	M	Apl.Ling.	4	y+n	Y (12)

N.B. In 'Previous study experiences + Pre-sessional course experience: 'y' is used for yes and 'n' for no experience. The English grade was grouped into 5 levels from the lowest 1 to the highest 5. (See Table 8.11)

Code	Academic stress mean	English stress mean	Socio-Cult. stress mean	Overall Stress Mean	Study period (years)
15 Keiko	3	3.5	2.9	3.13	1 yr (04-05)
16 Akane	3.6	2.9	2.9	3.13	1 yr (04-05)
17 Masami	**2.4**	**2.8**	**2.8**	**2.67**	**1 yr (04-05)**
18 Chieko	3.2	3.4	2.6	3.06	1 yr (04-05)

As the table shows, with the exception of Masami (17), they were all in their thirties. Masami was aged 26, and her low stress level (2.67) and her high English level (IELTS 8) can probably be explained by the fact that Masami lived in New York for 4 years from age 8 to 12 – a typical case of *Kikoku-shijo* (a returnee). Masami was chosen as the focus case for this group, because her stress graph showed the most frequent curves and changes.

Reiko (15) and Akane (16) had the same average scores (3.13) but their stress factors had very little in common. Reiko's main stress factor came from the Academic area, where she had difficulty in understanding course requirements and up-grading her research ability level, both in reading articles and writing coursework. She said:

'As I worked for 8 years as a teacher, after graduating from my university in Japan, there was a difficulty in returning to a student's life. As my study field in Japan did not include teaching methods, even though I belonged to a Language Department in my university, it was very difficult to understand Applied Linguistics.'

She marked a high stress score of 5 when she had to make an oral presentation in a classroom.

In contrast, Akane (16) had severe stress caused by a hall-mate. She commented:

'About two weeks after my arrival I was involved in a clash with a Middle Eastern hallmate. I knew that I was too emotional but at the same time I could not forgive his behaviour because it was so obvious that leaving a common shower room in a complete messy condition, with soaking floors and dirt all over, was indeed irresponsible behaviour.'

She also suffered from noise in this accommodation, since her room was above a kitchen, and after a big fuss and some negotiation, with some help from friends, she managed to move her house at the beginning of January, which settled her stress level down to 1. Akane said:

'I lacked readiness and was very nervous and under pressure to study hard. I did not have confidence in my physical power, and got tired easily even after a little shopping.

Each day was too short for me. Having a serious character myself, I could not find time to enjoy life or relax. I had always wished to do a Master's course, to mark my life, when I became 40. I had been working very hard in the past, so this chance of studying in the UK was going to be a kind of reward for me. However there was very little space for me to enjoy it, both psychologically and time-wise, and I realise now how much I lacked adaptability. I think that I am the 'weakest link' in this short intensive MA course.'

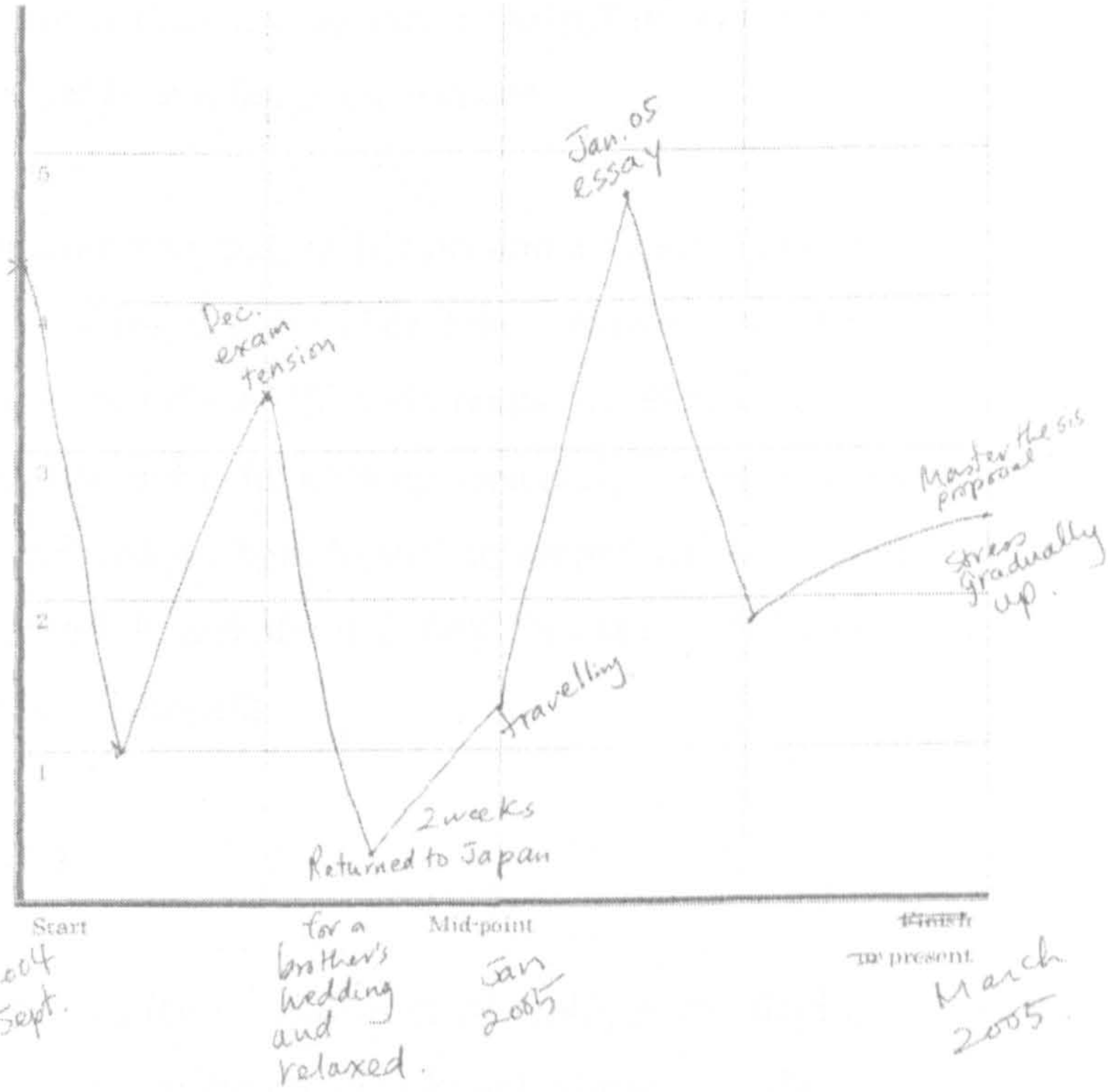
The selected representative of this Group V is Masami (17). Shown below is her Graph (11.5), which is followed by a commentary.

Graph 11.5. Stress / time graph for Masami (Group V)

MYN8

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



At the beginning Masami's stress level was just over 4, as she found it difficult to relate to other people on the course. The other two high stress peaks in her graph were caused by examination and coursework deadlines. Her difference from Reiko and Akane was that she made time for relaxation during her course; hence her stress graph involved more curves and turnings.

Although Masami's average stress score was very low, with no scale 5 answers in her questionnaire, she mentioned some difficulties:

'I studied American Literature at my university in Japan, so I did not have enough background knowledge about language teaching and linguistics including methodology. Also I knew very little about the UK. The reason why I chose the UK was because, in my job, I had to look after children, who had returned from Commonwealth countries like Singapore or Malaysia, so I felt the need to expand my knowledge from just USA based information. Also, during my three year searching for a career in Tokyo, I found out about differences of pronunciation and vocabulary between American and British English from my colleagues, so that I wanted an opportunity to gain more accurate knowledge and skills as a language teacher.'

A minor complaint was that, in her accommodation, there was no bathtub, which she missed a lot, as taking a bath rather than a shower is a much more popular custom in Japan. She wondered if the UK could really be called a developed nation when she saw two water taps, hot and cold, running separately! This was because she had only lived in New York and Tokyo, both highly developed cities. Another comment was about high prices in the UK and she was very frustrated by the big difference in study fees according to one's nationality.

11.3.6. Group VI

Four female PhD students, aged from 29 to 45, in the field of Linguistics, belonged to this group. Two were in the middle of their courses and the other two nearly at the end. The latter two were Toshiko (21), who had her interview a day before her *Viva Voce*, and Kaoru (22), who was interviewed in Japan whilst waiting for the date of her *Viva* to be notified after the submission of her thesis. Kaoru, who was chosen as group

representative, showed the most frequent turnings in her stress graph, and her stress score (3.29) was the highest in the group. The following Table (11.7) shows the profiles of this group.

Table11.7. Personal factors of Group VI interviewees

Code	Gen-der	Age	O'seas trips	Level	Field of study	Engl.group level	Previous stud.experi +pre.session	Job (years)
19 Sumiko	f	29	3	D	Ling.	4	y+n	No
20 Fusae	f	44	5	M+D	Ling.	5	y+n	Yes (5+4)
21 Toshiko	f	27	5	D	Ling.	5	y+n	No
22 Kaoru	**f**	**31**	**5**	**D**	**Ling.**	**3**	**n+y**	**Yes (3)**

N.B. In 'Previous study experiences + Pre-sessional course experience: 'y' is used for yes and 'n' for no experience. The English grade was grouped into 5 levels from the lowest 1 to the highest 5. (See Table 8.11)

Code	Academic stress mean	English stress mean	Socio-cult. stress mean	Overall Stress Mean	Study period (years)
19 Sumiko	2.9	3.1	2.5	2.83	3 yrs (02-05)
20 Fusae	3.3	3.3	2	2.83	5 yrs (00-05)
21 Toshiko	1.6	2	2.1	1.93	4 yrs (01-05)
22 Kaoru	**3.8**	**3.1**	**3.3**	**3.29**	**4 yrs (00-04)**

The main reason why Toshiko (21) had such a low overall stress score was that there was no experience that she evaluated in the questionnaire as stress level 5. She marked as level 4 two events in the academic area ('progress in my study', and 'tuition fees'), two in the English language area ('speaking English in front of people' and 'speed of

English'), and five in the socio-cultural area ('finding good accommodation', 'unable to see friends and family', 'financial problems', 'different idea of cleanliness and sanitation' and 'social isolation'). Toshiko was one of 28 main survey respondents, about one in ten, whose average stress score was less than 2.00 probably partly because her English level was in the highest group. (IELTS over 7.5) She said that she liked to study English as a member of an English Speaking Society. She pursued the same topic throughout her BA, MA and PhD courses ('What does it mean to know a word?') and said that academic experience could never be a stress for her. She had her own pace of study and could enjoy writing her thesis. When she was asked if she had experienced any new problems of academic writing skills, she explained that she kept reading a number of related articles every week, when she was still an undergraduate student, so that she was familiar not only with terminology, but also the styles and formality of academic essay writing.

Toshiko's stress graph had only one peak of level 4, which occurred a few months after starting her course. This was caused mainly by socio-cultural problems. She had trouble finding reasonable accommodation. The first place where she stayed had spider cob webs in the shower room and, when trying to find a new place, she had to face rejection by house owners she visited. One day, when she was riding her bike, a young boy plunged a tree bough towards her and demanded that she gave him some money. Some of her friends had also suffered from discriminatory incidents, having had eggs or stones thrown at them. If this had happened a little earlier, she said, she would have returned back to Japan at once. Since her research required help from Japanese university students, and she had a close boy-friend and family in Japan who supported her, she finished her dissertation in Japan and sent it to her supervisor, whom she did not find to be a great help. Her complaint was that, every time she had a tutorial with her supervisor, she had to explain her research project all over from the beginning. She wished that at least half of the information had been remembered by her supervisor. She commented that the UK doctorate research, which depends mainly on a supervisor-researcher relationship, needs to be altered. Toshiko did not ask any editor or proof reader for help with her thesis. Her coping strategy was '*to try to get used to the difference*' and '*not be bothered about minor problems*'.

Kaoru (22)

Interestingly Kaoru's account was different from Toshiko's. Kaoru was very grateful to

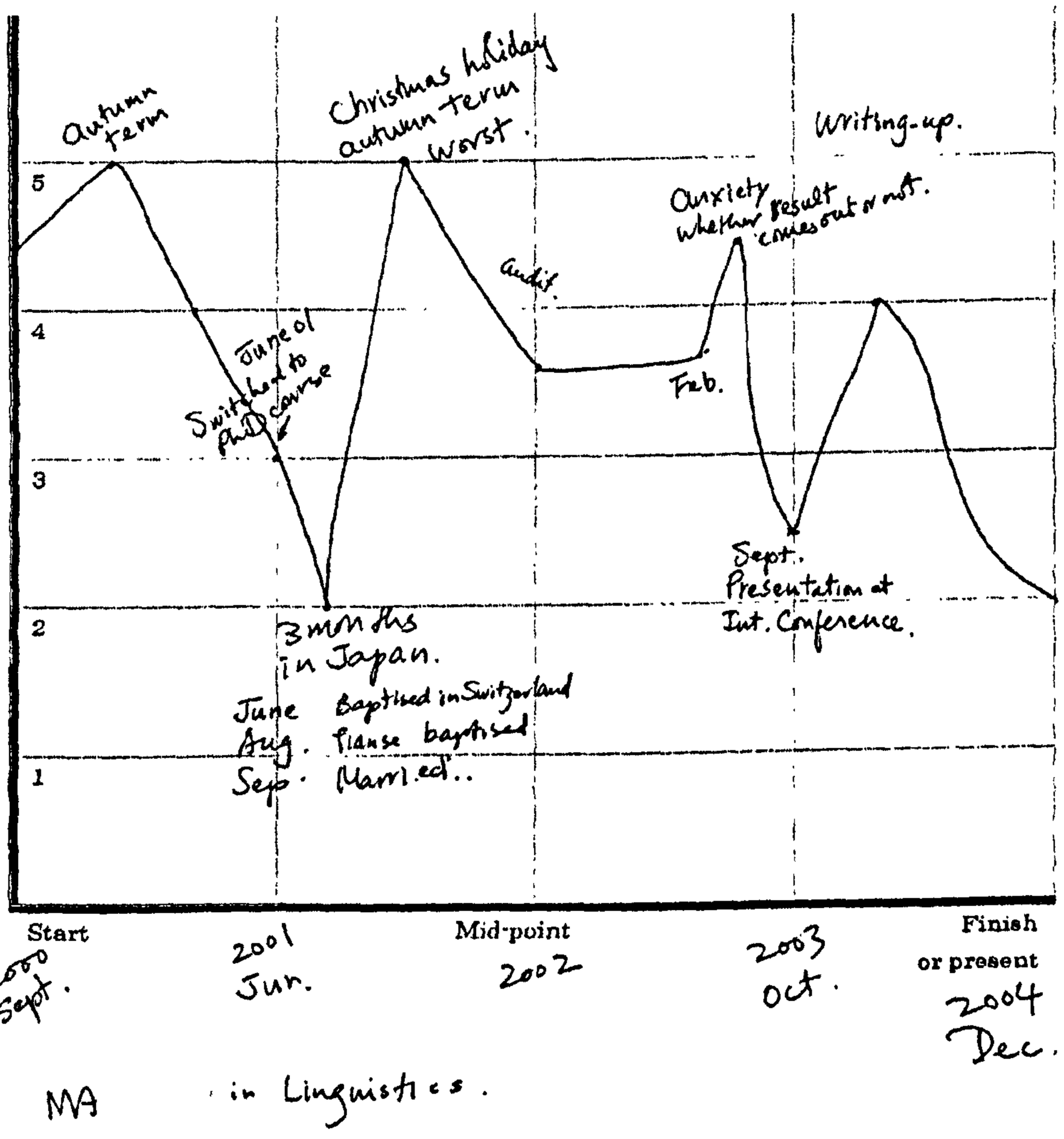
her supervisor, who supported her in many ways including entire proof reading. Kaoru studied English literature for her BA degree in Japan, so that studying theoretical linguistics was very new to her when she started her MA course in England. In her first year she visited her supervisor's office many times asking about how to write coursework.

Graph 11.6. Stress / time graph for Kaoru (Group VI)

KY214

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



At first her stress level was 4.5, because of this tension, and it soon went up to 5, during the autumn term, mainly because of having little background knowledge and skills in her study field. In June the following year, after she wrote a long research proposal, she was able to transfer to a Doctorate course instead of completing an MA degree.

By this time she said that her stress score went down to level 2, as she could see for herself what to do next. She then took three month's holiday, went to Switzerland, and became a Christian. Her Japanese boyfriend also got baptized in August and they were married in the summer. In the autumn term of her second year (2001) her stress score went up to level 5, because she could not understand many points about her research and she could not get any advice even though she went to ask her teacher many times. She said:

'The autumn of 2001 was the worst. There were many points I could not understand and so I asked my teacher a lot of questions. However I received no replies to my questions. Then an assignment was given to me. It was to write anything I wished using the data that I had collected during my first year. When I submitted this my teacher's attitude suddenly changed, and he started to listen to me. After a year I collected data somehow, but my stress went up and I became nervous as I was not sure how the result would turn out. In September 2003, two years after my transfer, I was given a chance to make a presentation at an International Conference of Linguistics, which made me feel a sense of achievement. After that I stayed in Japan and finished my dissertation in December 2004, despite a slight problem of balancing my research and housework until my husband finally understood the importance of my research.'

When Kaoru was asked what her hardest task was during her study, she explained:

'Each week's shopping was the hardest both time-wise and psychologically. Since I only allowed myself to go shopping once a week, the shopping bags were very heavy. To cope with this, I tried to keep to a routine to refresh my mood regularly. Sometimes I had meals at Tesco's cafeteria in order to economise my time, and chose a time for shopping to avoid the rush hour.'

This provided a clear example of Kaoru's coping strategy in balancing study requirements

with newly acquired domestic responsibilities. It should also be understood that the stressful feelings of Kaoru's, about shopping in her daily life, were no doubt influenced by her workload as an international research student living in UK.

11.3.7. Group VII

This group comprised three male and two female students, aged from 29 to 40 all taking PhD courses in different subjects. The table (11.8) below shows the group profiles and the group representative was on Eiji (24), whose profile is shown in bold style, as his graphs showed the most frequent curves and turnings. Four out of five students in this group drew more than one graph since their period of stay in the UK ranged from 5 to 10 years, in each case involving more than two institutions. This was a big contrast to Group VI. However it has already been found that fields of study are not a major factor in determining the level of stress. Besides academic reasons, such as coursework and dissertation deadlines, common reasons that caused high stress feelings in this group were 'time management problems due to taking part-time employment', 'uncertainty of research procedures', and 'human relationships'.

Before Eiji's interview is discussed, three students' cases are worth mentioning with a brief comment, in order to show the variety of stress factors affecting this group.

Namiko's (26) average stress score (1.88) was very low, but she mentioned a few problems which are worth consideration. In her Diploma Course in Urban Design, there was coursework that was assigned to a group of students instead of giving them individual tasks. She said she hated this because her classmates were not keen on cooperative group work and insisted on their own opinions and preferences. During her PhD course, Namiko suffered from leg pain, which could not be identified by her doctors for a long time, so that she had to suspend her course for a while. This caused her a high level 5 stress. Finally, in the writing-up stage, her greatest stress was uncertainty about how to finish her research. Once she found a way to proceed, she enjoyed writing her dissertation.

Ayumi's (25) average stress score (1.88) was almost as low as Namiko's, but the factors causing her stressful feelings were very different from Namiko's. During her long study

period in the UK, involving courses of Diploma, MA and PhD, she experienced various difficulties such as marriage problems, divorce, remarriage and even having a baby at the time of submitting her PhD thesis. She also experienced gossiping problems from other Japanese course mates. She said her coping strategy was just to '*go forward frantically*'. If she had tried to be cool and wise, she thought this would have made her feel much more severe stress.

Atsushi (23) also had a very long study history in the UK. His subject was a combined course of Art and Anthropology and, beside his worries about a future career, he had a time-management problem, with a family to look after and a part time commitment as a curator, which caused his stress graph to have two peaks during his course. (Appendix V).

Table11.8. Personal factors of Group VII interviewees

Code	Gen-der	Age	O'seas trips	Course Level	Field of study	Engl. group level	Previous stud.exp. +pre-session	Job (years)
23 Atsushi	m	38	5	B+M+D	Anthropol.	-	y+y	n
24 Eiji	**m**	**28**	**2**	**M+D**	**Anthropol.**	**4**	**y+n**	**n**
25 Ayumi	f	32	5	Dip+M+D	Literature	5	y+n	n
26 Namiko	f	39	5	M+Dip+D	Urb. Design	2	n+y	y(10)
27 Jou	m	35	5	M+D	Engineering	4	n+y	y(5)

N.B. In 'Previous study experiences + Pre-sessional course experience: 'y' is used for yes and 'n' for no experience. The English grade was grouped into 5 levels from the lowest 1 to the highest 5. (See Table 8.11)

Code	Academic stress mean	English stress mean	Socio-cult stress mean	Overall Stress Mean	Study period (years)
23 Atsushi	2.1	1.4	3.3	2.25	9yrs(89-94,01-05)
24 Eiji	**3.6**	**3.6**	**2.4**	**3.21**	**6 yrs (99-05)**
25 Ayumi	2.1	1.8	1.6	1.81	10 yrs (94-04)
26 Namiko	1.9	1.8	2	1.88	10 yrs (95-05)
27 Jou	2.8	3.7	3.2	3.23	5yrs (99-04)

Eiji (24)

Eiji started his MA in Anthropology, at a university in the south of England, with a stress level of 2. He was awarded a Rotary scholarship and chose the UK because the MA programme was only one year. His first stress peak, shown in Appendix V, was during his language training, due to a gossipy atmosphere among Japanese students which he tried at first to ignore. Fortunately he soon calmed down when the term began. When the first term-end paper deadline approached, his stress went up to 4. On receiving an unexpectedly favourable feedback, his feeling settled down to 2, which made him think seriously about the possibility of applying for a PhD course. When the deadline came for his MA thesis, his stress went up again to 4.

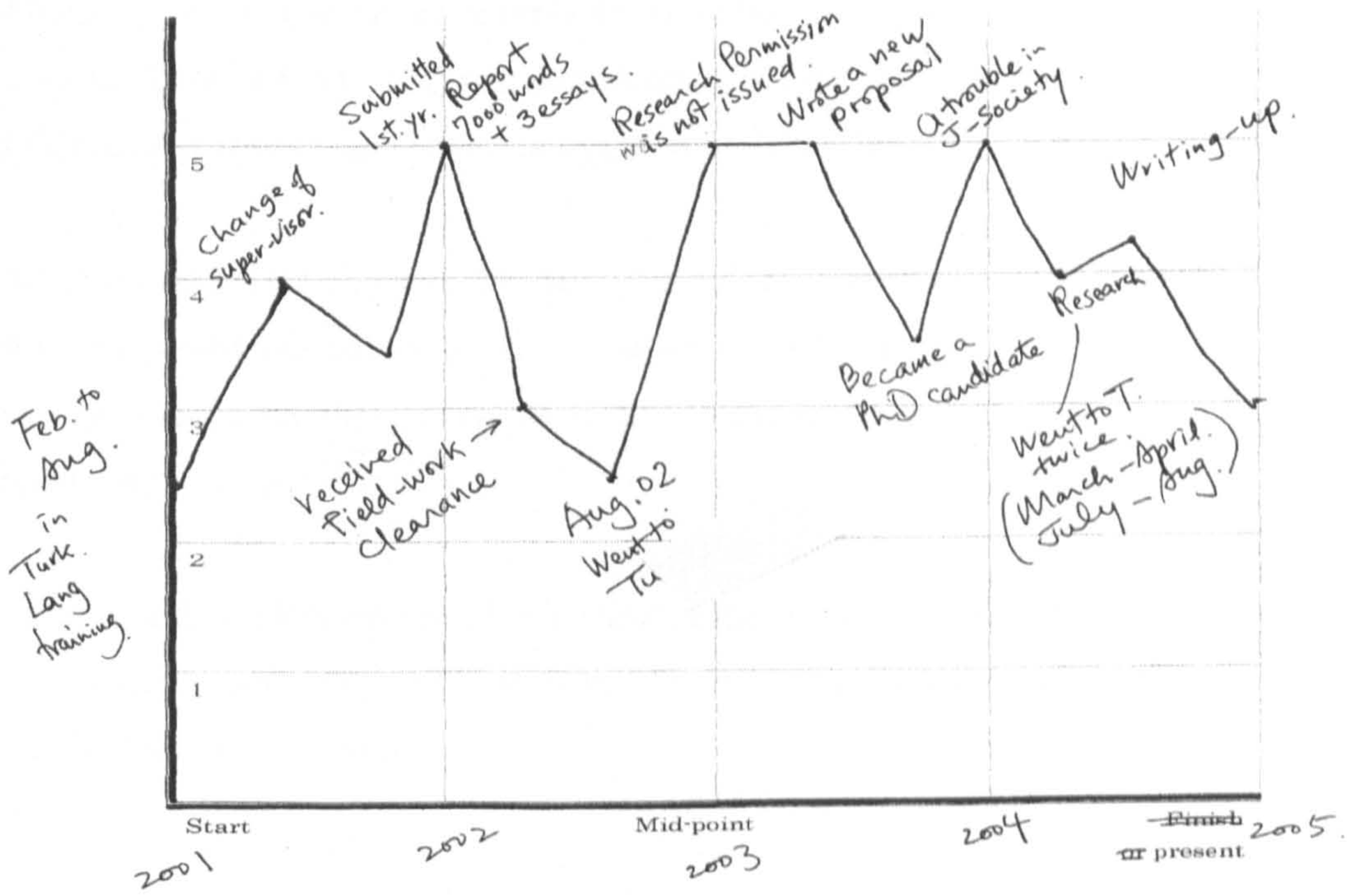
Graph 11.7. Stress / time graph (b) for Eiji (Group VII)

24

ET159 — 2

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



Eiji's doctorate course, at a prestigious university, started with a 2.5 level of stress, which soon went up to 4 because he had to cope with a change of supervisors. His first peak of stress came a year later when he was expected to submit a first year report of 7000 words, together with three more essays. Passing these challenges, he was given a fieldwork clearance which reduced his stress to 2.5. A year later he went to Eastern Europe for fieldwork but could not obtain research permission from the local government for a long time, which caused his stress level to rise to 5. Eventually he had to give up his first proposal and he wrote a new proposal with extremely stressful feelings. When he finally became a PhD candidate, his stress settled down to 3.5. However this was not the end of his hardships. In his third year, there was a serious organisation problem in the Japanese students' society at his institution. The president of the society suddenly disappeared, irresponsibly caring about no one. Eiji was then the secretary of the organization and had no choice but to take charge of sorting out all the remaining problems. He said this was definitely at a stress level above 5. He even had to take over the presidency of the group. He was then in the stage of writing-up his dissertation with level 3 stress.

Eiji was not a fast talker, but most of his words came out with certain assuredness and a touch of humour. In his questionnaire reply he wrote that he experienced no stress at all in getting used to different food. This was remarkable since the survey shows that most male students feel severer stress than females in trying to find their favourite food.

At the end of his interview, Eiji said that he still could not believe that he was doing a PhD course at such a prestigious university. This was uttered with almost a sigh, but at the same time it was possible to see that he was enjoying life and learning much from his overseas study opportunity.

This account of Eiji's interview ends the review of the follow-up interviews and the next section (11.4) provides a further analysis of the 27 stress / time graphs that were drawn by students at the time of their interview.

11.4. Further analysis of the 27 stress/time graphs

11.4.1. Peaks of stress shown on graphs

A table giving all the peak stress reasons for the stress/time graphs is shown in the Appendix V.

The table below (11.9) shows for each of the 27 students the reasons given by them for all the peaks of stress shown on their graphs. There is, of course, more than one peak on nearly all the graphs. The total number of students for each of the reasons is given together with their reference numbers.

All but one of the respondents identified peak stress due to either or both examinations and coursework. About one third identified psychological problems and a quarter human relationships as peak stress points on their graph. Nobody mentioned financial problems or leisure activities as a cause of peak stress.

The only student who reported no peak stress in either examinations or coursework was a female PhD student (Toshiko, 21), aged 27, reading Applied Linguistics. She also had no high stress levels except on one occasion when she was threatened because of her ethnicity. (See 11.3.6 Group VI.) There were two other students who had no stress at either level 4 or 5. One was a female PhD student aged 29 (Sumiko,19) in Applied Linguistics and the other a male aged 35 (Kiyoshi,14) who was on a two-year post graduate Diploma course after a foundation course at another University in the UK. Both these students had a slight stress at the start of their course which reduced rapidly with only a very slight increase at the end of the course.

Table 11.9. The causes of all peaks of stress on the stress / time graphs (N=27)

Cause of peak stress	Number of students	Students reference numbers
Final exam.	15	1,4,6,10,11,12,13,17,18,20, 23,24,25,26,27
Other exams.	12	3,4,5,8,9,10,11,14,15,16,17,25
Total exams.	**22**	
Assignments, coursework	17	2,3,6,7,9,11,13,14,15,16,17, 18,20,22,24,25,27,
IELTS test	3	4,7,25
Group work	1	26
Total coursework	**19**	
Anxiety	5	10,12,22,23,25
Visa worries	2	1,3
Insomnia	1	7
Total psychological problems	**8**	
Boy/girl - friend problems	3	5,6,7
Change of supervisor	3	1,25,26
Japanese group problems	3	24,25,26
Loneliness	1	9
Misanthropy	1	25
Divorce	1	25
Total human relationships	**7**	
Illness	1	26
Eating disorder	1	4
Physical health problems	**2**	
Accommodation problems	2	8,16
Total living conditions	**2**	
New year return to Japan	2	5,22
Cultural friction	1	21
Weather	1	7
Move to London	1	13
Total culture, custom and habits	**5**	
Leisure and hobby participation	**0**	

Since the time of the survey, Greenland and Brown (2005) presented, in *the Journal of Social Psychology,* a longitudinal study, which took place over a period of 12 months, of 35 students from Japan studying in the UK. The study focused on acculturative stress. This was defined as an aversive state arising from difficulties, experienced by the minority group members when culturally diverse groups adjust to each other, that arise from contact with a majority culture that differs from their own. Symptoms considered included anxiety, depression, confusion, low self-esteem and psycho-somatic illness. Three surveys were carried out, the first within 2 weeks of the participants' arrival in the UK, then after 8 months and finally after 12 months. The students were all studying English together with a limited number of academic classes in other subjects.

Earlier research had suggested that language ability and perceived cultural difference were associated with acculturative stress and psycho-somatic illness over time. This new research found two other variables, in-group bias and inter-group anxiety. Higher inter-group anxiety was associated with increased acculturative stress whereas higher in-group bias was associated with reduced psycho-somatic illness. (p. 373) However, as the authors acknowledged, the limited sample size of 35 casts some doubt on the validity of these result.

11.4.2. Changes in students' perceived stress from the start of the course to the final examination

In many cases students stayed on after their final examinations and often there was a lowering of stress shown on their graphs. However the table shown below (11.10) takes the final examination or submission as the end point for considering stress. The figures in bold show the increase or decrease of the stress level from the start of the course to that at the time of the final examination or submission.

Table 11.10. The change of interviewees' perceived stress from the start of the course to the final examination.

Student Identification Number	Initial Stress	Final Exam. Stress	Change	Student Identification Number	Initial Stress	Final Exam. Stress	Change
1	1	5	**+4**	15	4	4	**0**
2	4	1	**-3**	16	5	3	**-2**
3	1	3	**+2**	17	4	2	**-2**
4	1	5	**+4**	18	1	5	**+4**
5	5	3	**-2**	19	3	2	**-1**
6	1	4	**+3**	20	2	5	**+3**
7	4	4	**0**	21	2	1	**-1**
8	1	5	**+4**	22	5	1	**-4**
9	1	5	**+4**	23	3	5	**+2**
10	2	5	**+3**	24	2	4	**+2**
11	3	5	**+2**	25	2	1	**-1**
12	5	5	**0**	26	3	1	**-2**
13	2	5	**+3**	27	3	4	**+1**
14	3	2	**-1**	Average stress	2.7	3.5	**+0.8**

The average stress level rose by nearly one third from the start of the course to the time of the final examination or submission.

There were 14 cases where stress increased from the start to the end of the course and 10 cases where it was reduced. 3 students showed the same stress at both times. 8 students showed high stress at the start of their course (level 4 or 5), which seem rather surprising until one remembers that this was a time when they were encountering so many cultural differences in both the classroom and society. 15 students showed high stress (4 or 5) at the time of their final examination which is probably less surprising. 6 students had low stress (less than 4) at both the start and end of their course although only two had no high stress (level 4 or 5) at any point in their graph.

11.4.3. Maximum stress levels on the stress/time graphs

It cannot, of course, be assumed that the maximum stress level experienced by students would be at the time of the final examination or submission of a thesis. Table 11.11 below shows, for each of the 27 students, where on the time scale the maximum stress was

experienced. A comparison is made of the stress experienced at the start of the course (S), at the time of the final exam or submission (F) and during the course (C). The highest stress level is then determined. In a few cases the highest stress level was found to be equal in two of the three target areas as shown in the table (11.11) below.

Table 11.11. Maximum stress levels of the interviewees on the stress/time graphs

Student identification number	The time of maximum stress (S, C, or F)	The main reason given by the students to explain the cause of the maximum stress
1	F	Academic
2	C	Academic
3	C	Anxiety
4	C	Anxiety
5	C/F	Boyfriend / Academic
6	C	Boyfriend
7	C	Boyfriend
8	F	Accommodation problem (noise)
9	C/F	Academic / Academic
10	C/F	Anxiety / Academic
11	F	Academic
12	S/F	Anxiety / Academic
13	C	Academic
14	S	Academic
15	C	Academic
16	S	Academic
17	C	Academic
18	C/F	Academic / Academic
19	S	Anxiety
20	C	Academic / Part-time job problem
21	C	Cultural friction
22	C	Anxiety
23	C/F	Anxiety
24	C	Academic / Japan Society problem
25	C	Anxiety
26	C/F	Group work / Group work
27	F	Academic
Maximum stress totals: C=13, F=4, C/F=6, S=3, S/F=1		

These results show that the maximum stress level on the students' stress/time graphs was most common during the course (13) compared with only 4 students at the time of final examination and 3 at the start of the course. A further 6 students had equal maximum stress both during and at the time of the final examination, and 1 student both at the start of the course and the final examination.

The reasons given for this maximum stress are summarized below (11.12) using half scores for each of the reasons for the C/F and S/F students.

Table 11.12. Causes of maximum stress levels of interviewees

	Start of course	During the course	Final exam or submission time	Total causes
Academic	2	6.5	5.5	14
Anxiety	1.5	5	0.5	7
Boy-friend		2.5		2.5
Accommodation			1	1
Group work		0.5	0.5	1
Part time job		0.5		0.5
Cultural friction		1		1
Totals (27)	3.5	16	7.5	

The table shows that about half the students found academic problems caused most of the highest stress level, with almost equal numbers finding this stress either during the course or at the final examination or submission. Two students, rather surprisingly, experienced their maximum academic stress at the start of their course possibly due to an inadequate English level or to the new teaching methods in the UK. Just over a quarter of the students reported that their maximum stress was caused by anxiety mainly during the course. Five female students reported that problems in their relationships with boyfriends caused them maximum stress, in each case during the course. One student blamed his noisy accommodation and one cultural friction when a stone had been thrown at her. Two others found major problems in working as part of a group of students and another experienced difficulties caused mainly by a part time job.

Rather surprisingly no student reported a maximum stress level for financial problems despite the fact that, as shown in Table 8.5.1, these problems came third in the mean stress level (3.08) with 44% of respondents choosing one of the two highest levels of stress for this problem! This suggests that either the problem was not as severe as the data from the questionnaire suggests, or that the financial stress was a problem throughout their stay in the UK.

11.5. Conclusion

The main aim of the research is to investigate the stress perceived by Japanese students in the UK. Whilst the preliminary and the main survey gave much information about the types and degree of stress encountered, it was important to use information from the interviews and stress graphs in order to gain a much clearer picture of the way stress affected each individual throughout their stay in the UK and also how they coped with their problems. This third phase of the investigation provided a much more colourful and detailed story of how individual students experienced and coped with stress throughout their studies. Study of the students' reasons for the peak stress levels in the stress/time graphs gave a fresh insight into the relative importance of the main categories of events causing stress. This also provided an answer to the sixth subsidiary research question, mentioned in Chapter 1.4, which was 'How are stress factors related to time factors throughout the students' stay in the UK?' Since the questions in the interviews, and the guidance about the stress graphs, was all given in Japanese, it was possible to avoid any misunderstanding of the questions due to language difficulties, and the fact that the researcher herself is a Japanese student in a UKHEI gave respondents a feeling of 'rapport' which probably helped their statements to be more reliable.

There are no apologies for the detailed reporting of seven selected students' perceptions of stress. It is important to gain this wider understanding of stress and this could not be achieved merely by looking at quantitative data. This data indicates the types of stress/ problems and also the degree of perceived stress. However it is by looking at each individual to see how stress is related to their everyday lives over a period of time that we can more fully understand its nature and the need for more help to be given when this is clearly beneficial.

Chapter Twelve. Comparison of Three Sets of Data - Further Analysis and Discussion

But where is wisdom to be found, and where is the place of understanding? (Job 28:12.)

12.1. Introduction

This chapter re-examines key findings from the whole research by comparing overall results from the three sets of data which the research has provided. This involves looking at the same data, from a different angle, with a new analytical insight. In doing this, one aim is to gain a more holistic understanding of the relationships of three prominent areas of students' experiences, i.e. language, academic and socio-cultural. At the start of this research there was an assumption that stress factors and coping strategies of Japanese students in UKHEIs would be most readily identified in these three areas of students' experiences. It is now necessary to look at the heart of the matter by revisiting the data with a retrospective overview. The overall analyses and discussions in this chapter are therefore focused on the comparison of students' stressful feelings among these three areas. This is followed by a comparison of some of the research findings with earlier or more recent research.

12.2. Overview of three sets of data

The research involved three stages of data collection – preliminary interviews, the main survey, and the follow-up interviews. Table 12.1 below shows overall features of these three data collection procedures. All participants had previously studied, or were then studying, in UKHEIs at the time of the data collection.

Table 12.1. Features of three sets of data collection

3 Stages of data collection	Participants	Questions asked
(1) Preliminary study	Total 35 (=19 interview and 16 email) respondents	12 verbal questions (shown in chapter 7)
(2) The main survey	285 Japanese students in UKHEIs	150 questions with both numerical and verbal answers (Appendix III.)
(3)The follow-up inter-views	27 Japanese students	12 questions including 2 for a stress / time graph (Appendix VI)

These three stages of data collection and their results were fully reported in Chapters Seven to Eleven. The present aim is to compare the data, and discuss findings, in a way that will lead to an enhanced insight into students' problems and their coping strategies.

12.3. Summary of key findings from 3 sets of data

12.3.1. Stage 1 – Preliminary Interviews

The 35 respondents at this stage were given 12 questions, in which the main aim was to discover what their main difficulties in their student experiences in the UK were from the viewpoints of (a) the language area, (b) the academic area, and (c) the socio-cultural area. One of the most important findings was that, while students had difficulties in all these three interrelated areas of experience, those relating mainly to language difficulties were considered most severe.

Reconsidering the overall results of this preliminary data it is possible to say that the order of severity of problems was the language experience area > the academic experience area > the socio-cultural experience area. This was mainly because most of the participants in the

preliminary interviews had little hesitation in identifying their language problems, with as many as seven respondents explicitly admitting that this was their most serious problem, whilst five respondents mentioned that they had not experienced many serious academic problems during their courses besides their language difficulties. Two of them even mentioned that the educational differences between Japan and the UK were interesting and often attractive. Some statements relating to socio-cultural areas of experience were even more diverse, including comments about both stressful and enjoyable experiences.

12.3.2. Stage 2 – Main Survey

(a) The overall degree of stress experienced in the main areas of difficulty

The questionnaire at Stage 2 contained two separate sections about stress factors. The first had nine items and asked respondents to choose degree of difficulties from 5 (extremely stressful) to 1 (the least stressful). The results from Chapter 8 are shown here again:

Table 12.2. A comparison of the overall stress levels in the nine areas of difficulties identified by the survey.
(N.B. The figures indicated here are the total percentage of those who chose one of the two highest levels of stress (5 and 4), while the overall mean stress level is in brackets (N=285).

Academic problems - 71% (3.83)
English language problems - 65% (3.57)
Financial problems - 44% (3.08)
Psychological problems - 37% (2.94)
Human relationships - 27% (2.68)
Living conditions - 26% (2.67)
Physical health problems - 16% (2.27)
Culture, customs, habits - 11% (2.18)
Leisure and hobby participation - 10% (2.06)

This time the order of severity of problems was the academic area > the language experience area > the socio-cultural area. However there is often a clear relationship or overlap between academic and language problems. So too much should not be read into this reversal of order from the preliminary interviews. It is significant that nearly a half of all respondents had fairly stressful financial problems, closely followed by psychological problems which may have partly been influenced by financial considerations as well as the other areas of difficulty identified. It is perhaps not surprising that a quarter of all respondents found fairly stressful problems in human relationships and living conditions. The cultural differences between the two countries must have presented some challenges.

The second section investigated stress levels in the three areas of student experience, each of which contained 16 question items, dealing in all with a total of 48 potentially stressful events. Here again academic problems were found to be the most severe overall (2.89) but only slightly higher than those for language (2.82). This was shown in the table in Section 8.4 in detail and also in two tables below which show the average stress of the three areas in total (Table 12.3) and all 48 stressful events (Section 8.5) arranged according to the degree of severity measured by the mean value of the students responses between 5 (extremely stressful) and 1 (the least stressful). (Table 12.4)

Table 12.3. A comparison of the mean level of stress in the three areas of difficulty (N=285)

Mean of 16 academic stressful events	2.89
Mean of 16 language stressful events	2.82
Mean of 16 socio-cultural stressful events	2.60

Table 12.4. A comparison of the mean levels of stress in 48 stressful events

(The 48 stressful events rearranged in order of the mean severity together with the percentage of students with the two highest levels of stress (4 and 5).) (The three codes leading each item (AC, EL, SC) stand for Academic, English Language, and Socio-Cultural. N=285)

Stressful events	Mean score	The percentage of the two highest levels of stress (5+4)
AC5-Exam & coursework	4.11	79 %
AC7-Oral presentation	3.74	66
EL3-Speaking English in front of people	3.74	68
AC8-Group discussion	3.62	62
EL6-Participating in class discussion	3.50	58
AC6-Good assessment	3.36	51
EL1-Writing English	3.35	58
SC12-Anxiety for the future	3.28	48
AC4-Course requirements	3.22	48
AC15-Paying tuition	3.22	51
SC8-Financial problems	3.16	44
EL10-Making claims in English	3.15	48
EL5-Understanding other students remarks	3.12	45
EL2-Reading English	3.11	46
AC9-Progress in study	3.07	40
SC7-Dealing with the police, hospital staff, and other public officials	3.03	42
EL4-Understanding lectures & note-taking	3.01	39
AC3-Study skills	2.96	42
SC2-Good accommodation	2.96	39
AC1-Obtaining admission	2.95	44
EL13-Dialects and non-UK English	2.84	37
SC11-Damage to belongings or theft	2.83	32
EL9- Using telephones	2.82	37
EL12- Quick speaking in English	2.8	36
SC10-Different ideas of cleanliness	2.79	33
AC2-Different teaching styles	2.78	37
SC14-Racial discrimination	2.63	24
SC4-English weather	2.62	29
EL14-Asking editing help for essays	2.59	24
SC6-Inability to see families and friends in Japan	2.55	26

SC13-Feeling isolation	2.52	23
EL16-Too much use of Japanese	2.49	25
AC13-Obtaining references	2.47	28
AC14-Information about class change	2.46	21
SC9-Maintaining health	2.42	18
SC16-Dealing with parcels / mail delivery	2.42	24
AC10-Relationships with classmates	2.41	21
AC11-Teacher /student relationships	2.35	18
EL7-Daily conversation with friends / teachers	2.35	21
EL15-Inability to use Japanese	2.23	16
SC1-Making friends with people	2.20	13
SC15-Gossiping among Japanese	2.20	16
SC3-Different foods	2.17	17
EL8-Understanding newspapers and TV	2.00	10
EL11-Shopping and public transport	1.98	11
AC16-Obtaining support from Japan	1.85	14
SC5-Meeting new people	1.85	6
AC12-Library use	1.69	9

It should be noted that the difference in the mean scores of academic and language stress was very narrow, as Table 12.3 shows, just 0.07 on the Likert scale. It is also notable that in Table 12.4 the top seven highest stress items were from academic and language stress areas (4 ACs and 3 ELs). Among 17 stressful events which gained a mean stress-score of more than 3.00 there were 7 events each from AC and EL categories but only 3 items from the SC category. This suggests that there is a need for further investigation in order to clarify how closely language and academic problems are interrelated in terms of students' stressful feelings. So far most of the results obtained from the main survey, as shown in Chapter Eight, were mainly based on the answers given by the survey participants, who were just slightly less than 5 % of the total population of Japanese students in the UK at that time. For this reason further statistical analyses were carried out to seek more accurate/in-depth findings in relation to stress factors of the Japanese students in the UKHEIs in order to generalize to the total population of Japanese students in the UK. The following is the result of factor analysis using SPSS (a computerised Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

(b) Underlying relationships of stressful experiences (Factor Analysis)

The term 'factor' has two meanings as Pallant (2005) explained:

'In factor analysis it refers to the group or clump of related variables, while in analysis of variance techniques it refers to the independent variable. These are very different things, despite having the same name....' (p.173)

In this study the term factor is used to mean the former of the two, indicating a group of related variables, whereas each variable is called a stressful event or a question item. Stress factors identified by statistical analyses need to be interpreted by people and be given a new name to indicate each group. The term 'stressor' is used in this study to mean each stress factor extracted by analytical techniques including Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Pallant (2005, p.172) also mentions that 'factor analysis is a 'data reduction' technique, that takes a large set of variables and looks for 'clumps' or groups among the inter-correlations of a set of variables'. Thus the 48 stressful events were subjected to principal components analysis (PCA) using SPSS in order to find out the underlying relationships of 48 stressful events identified by 285 respondents.

The following Table 12.5 is the list of factors (or variable groups) out of the 48 items that were found to have strong correlations in each group ($r>.4$). What matters here is to find out the common underlying feature of those variables in each group and to name it. It is then possible to see how these three areas of experiences are inter-related within each group.

Table 12.5 Composition of thirteen stress factors extracted by SPSS

Factor Analysis using SPSS
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.
From Rotated Component Matrix (Rescaled)

Factor 1. English Language Stressor for Communication (M=2.69)
EL13 Understanding varieties of English (r=.741, M=2.84)
EL9 Talking on the telephone (in English) (r=.727, M=2.82)
EL7 Daily conversations with friends and teachers (r=.726, M=2.36)
EL12 Quick speaking in English (r=.720, M=2.80)
EL10 Making a complaint, arguing or claiming in English (r=.710, M=3.15)
EL11 Daily communication outside campus (e.g. shopping, or bus) (r=.681, M=1.98)
EL8 Reading newspapers and watching TV or movies (r=.596, M=2.00)
EL14 Asking for proof-reading (r=.504, M=2.59)
EL5 Understanding questions or opinions by other students during classes (r=.431, M=3.12)
EL3 Speaking English in front of many people (r=.421, M=3.74)
SC1 Making friends (r=.417, M=2.2)

Factor 2. English Language Stressor for Academic Performance (M=3.54)
AC7 Making oral presentations in the classroom (r=.833, M=3.74)
AC8 Participating in group discussions (r=.805, M=3.62)
EL6 Participating in group discussions by expressing questions or opinions (r=.752, M=3.50)
EL3 Speaking English in front of many people (r=.691, M=3.74)
EL5 Understanding questions or opinions by other students during classes (r=.439, M=3.12)

Factor 3. Academic Stressor for Managing Study Requirements (M=3.23)
AC3 Acquiring new study skills (r=.790, M=2.97)
AC4 Understanding course requirements (r=.703, M=3.22)
AC2 Adjusting to new methods of teaching (r=.644, M=2.78)
AC9 Making progress in your study (r=.479, M=3.07)
AC5 Dealing with examinations and coursework. (r=.465, M=4.11)

Factor 4. Academic Stressor for Achievement (M=3.39)
EL1 Writing English (r=.765, M=3.35)
EL2 Reading English (r=.739, M=3.11)
EL4 Understanding lectures and taking notes (r=.517, M=3.01)
AC5 Dealing with examinations and coursework. (r=.428, M=4.11)

Factor 5. Human Relationships Stressor (M=2.32)
AC10 Relationships with fellow students (r=.714, M=2.41)
AC11 Relationships with teachers (r=.614, M=2.35)
SC1 Making friends (r=.497, M=2.20)

Factor 6. Life Stressor in the UK (M=2.58)
SC4 Getting used to UK weather (r=.843, M=2.62)
SC3 Getting used to new / different food (r=.682, M=2.17)
SC6 Inability to see families and friends (r=,547, M=2.55)
SC2 Finding good accommodation (r=.492, M=2.96)

Factor 7. Financial Stressor (M=3.19)
AC15 Paying the course fees (r=.909, M=3.22)
SC8 Dealing with financial procedures (r=.893, M=3.16)

Factor 8. Socio-Cultural Stressor (M=2.68)
SC11 Theft or damage to belongings (r=.815, M=2.83)
SC10 Different ideas of sanitary habits (r=.725, M=2.79)
SC9 Maintaining health (r=.463, M=2.42)

Factor 9. Japanese Stressor for Communication (M=2.24)
EL16 Too much use of Japanese (r=.753, M=2.49)
EL15 Lack of opportunity to use Japanese, including books and PC. (r=.615, M=2.23)
SC16 Postal and other delivery services (r=.414, M=2.42)
SC5 Meeting new people (r=.375, M=1.85)
SC15 Gossiping among Japanese (r=.371, M=2.20)

Factor 10. Identity Stressor (M=2.81)
SC12 Anxiety for the future (r=.731, M=3.28)
SC13 Social isolation or loneliness (r=.647, M=2.52)
SC14 Racial discrimination (r=.618, M=2.63)

Factor 11. Information Access Stressor (M=2.21)
AC13 Gaining access to necessary data and books for references (r=.792, M=2.47)
AC12 Using libraries (r=.628, M=1.69)
AC14 Obtaining necessary information about course / class changes (r=.431, M=2.46)

Factor 12. Obtaining Admission and Info-Seeking Stressor (M=2.81)
AC1 Obtaining admission (r=.796, M=2.95)
AC14 Obtaining necessary information about course / class changes (r=.388, M=2.46)
<SC7 Dealing with police, hospital and other public staff/officials (r=.343, M=3.03)>

Factor 13. Evaluation Stressor (M=3.22)
AC6 Gaining good assessments (r=.718, M=3.36)
AC9 Making progress in study (r=.344, M=3.07)

The above 13 factors were divided into three groups according to the severity of stressful feelings shown by the mean score of each factor. This is shown in Table 12.6 below, which

identified the important underlying factors for most students.

Table 12.6. High, medium, and low level stress factors

Higher-stress factors (Mean stress score more than 3.00)
Factor 2. English language stressor for academic performance (M=3.54)
Factor 4. Academic stressor for achievement (M=3.39)
Factor 3. Academic stressor for managing study requirements (M=3.23)
Factor 13. Evaluation/assessment stressor (M=3.22)
Factor 7. Financial stressor (M=3.19)
Medium-stress factors (Mean stress score between 2.50 and 3.00)
Factor 10. Identity stressor (M=2.81)
Factor 12. Obtaining admission and info-seeking stressor (M=2.81)
Factor 8. Socio-cultural stressor (M=2.68)
Factor 1. English Language Stressor for communication (M=2.69)
Factor 6. Life stressor in UK (M=2.58)
Lower-stress factors. (Mean stress score less than 2.5)
Factor 5. Human relationships stressor (M=2.32)
Factor 9. Japanese stressor for communication (M=2.24)
Factor 11. Information access stressor (M=2.21)

It can be seen that stress factors are severest when academic and language problems overlap together as in Factors 2 and 4. This outcome is very interesting and important since it is not accurate to say that Factor 1, language difficulty in communication is the greatest cause of Japanese students' stress. It involves 10 language and 1 socio-cultural item, and came ninth in order out of 13 stressors so that it was only included in the medium stress factors' group. Nevertheless the English language difficulty in academic performance together with 3 other academic stressors were clearly the highest causes of stress. Stress caused by financial worries was also significantly high.

(c) Comparison of stress levels between various groups of students (ANOVA)

Students' stress levels can also be examined and compared according to specific categories such as gender, field of study, pre-sessional course participation, and level of English language ability. Analyses were carried out to find out if there were any significant group differences. This analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed some interesting statistical test results with significant mean differences ($p<.05$) being obtained.
Significant group differences are shown below for various categories in relation to specific stress factors.

(c.i) Gender

F8. Socio-cultural stressor (m=2.68)

Female students (m=2.77) > Male students (m=2.50) **(p<.03)**

Factor 8 consists of the socio-cultural problems of maintaining health, coping with different sanitary habits and dealing with thefts or damage to one's own belongings. This result, showing female students experience more stress than male students, invites a further enquiry – Is this female/male difference unique to Japanese people or common to students of other nationalities? A quotation from Joy Hendry's *Understanding Japanese Society (1987)* may shed a light in helping to understand this aspect: 'During the Second World War the Japanese were described as 'pathologically clean' by their enemies in the United States. (p.38) ... Some of the earliest acquired ideas which are most difficult to dislodge in any society are those associated with dirt and cleanliness. .. It seems likely, therefore, that a system of classification associated with notions of dirt and cleanliness is held rather deeply.'(p.39) Since the primary responsibility in caring for the home is carried by females in Japan this is probably likely to make them more concerned about sanitation and cleanliness.

(c.ii) Field of study.

(N=natural sciences, S=social sciences, H=Humanities)

F1. English language stressor for communication (M=2.69)

N (m=2.34) < S (m=2.57) < H (m=2.75) **(p<.003)**

F4. Academic stressor for achievement (m=3.39)

N (m=2.81) < S (m=3.27) < H (m=3.56) **(p<.001)**

F9. Japanese stressor for communication (m=2.24)

N (m=2.02) < S (m=2.19) < H (m=2.45) **(p<.001)**

F10. Identity stressor (m=2.81)

N (m=2.23) < S (m=2.76) < H (m=2.92) **(p<.011)**

This is a very straightforward result showing that students in Natural Sciences experience the least stress followed by those studying Social Sciences, while those in Humanities have the highest stress. It seems likely that this result is linked to the greatest need for correct English in the Humanities.

(c.iii) Pre-sessional course

(Yes= those who took pre-sessional courses, No=did not take)

F2. English language stressor for academic performance (M=3.54)

Yes (m=3.69) > No (m=3.40) **(p<.018)**

F8. Socio-cultural stressor (m=2.68)

Yes (m=2.80) > No (m=2.57) **(p<.043)**

This was the most unexpected result of all mean comparisons. Various possible explanations for the cause of higher stress in the group that took pre-sessional courses were considered; their low average English levels, or their personalities as being more cautious and therefore taking pre-sessional courses. The aims of pre-sessional courses are generally to reduce students stress or anxiety, and the evaluation of pre-sessional courses as 'satisfactory' by the survey respondents was very high. The top two responses (5 + 4) scored 76.6 %.

(c.iv) English level

(A= IELTS over 7.5, B=7, C=6.5 D=6, E=less than 5.5)

F1. English language stressor for communication (m=2.69)

A (m=2.35) < B (m=2.65) > C (m=2.60) < D (m=2.75) < E (m=3.33) **(p<.001)**

F4. Academic stressor for achievement (m=3.39)

A (m=3.16) < B (m=3.28) < C (m=3.34) < D (m=3.47) < E (m=3.86) **(p<.048)**

F9. Japanese stressor for communication (m=2.24)

A (m=1.74) < B (m=2.40) > C (m=2.34) < D (m=2.55) < E (m=2.92) **(p<.001)**

F13. Evaluation/assessment stressor (m=3.21)

A (m=3.47) > B (m=3.44) > C (m=3.13) > D (m=2.99) < E (m=3.22) **(p<.048)**

Students with the two highest English levels (IELTS of 7 or higher) both had the highest level of stress in Factor 13, which is a stressor about gaining a good assessment, or making good progress. This is interesting, as it suggests that stress is not always perceived by a group of 'less able or handicapped' students and that worry about academic achievement in this survey was greatest for those with the highest English ability. It seems that they probably had a greater determination to achieve high grades and were often taking more demanding courses.

This analysis helped to identify various significant features of stress perceived by Japanese students in UKHEIs, especially by the use of two analytical techniques: mean comparison and factor analysis. In comparing two sets of data between stages 1 and 2, it turned out that a simple formula defining the order of stress severity for Japanese students to be language > academic > socio-cultural, or academic > language > socio-cultural, was too simplistic. The real sources of difficulties of students' experience were detected in some combined situations such as language problems in writing coursework or expressing their own opinions in a classroom.

One reason for explaining the more severe language rather than academic difficulties from

stage 1 data could probably be because the great majority of stage 1 respondents had finished their courses, by the time of the interviews, so that they did not still have to face any serious academic deadlines or exam schedules. This suggested a need of further investigation especially by involving a time element in stress perception. This resulted in stage 3 stress / time graph research. There was also a need to investigate other additional stressful events, that were not dealt with in the main questionnaire, since the survey questions were categorically bounded.

12.3.3. Stage 3 – The interview phase

Chapter 11 described 7 case studies in detail. What about the data from all 27 interviewees as a whole? Each person told different stories of stress. The stress graphs drawn by Stage 3 interviewees provided many very different and interesting features of the students' stress perception, showing a much more complete picture of their difficulties. For example, it was found out that the same event (e.g. boy friend / girl friend relationship) could mean both high level and low level stress depending on the quality of the relationship at any particular time.

Comparing the two sets of data (stage 2 and 3) there were some points of both agreement and disagreement between the two. A number of respondents who had identified as problems, issues of hygiene, different food and gossiping among the Japanese, in the survey, mentioned these again in the interviews without any prompting by the interviewer. This indicated that for these students the problems had really caused considerable stress.

The relationship between English language ability and stress level was very clear. However, those who had a higher level of English ability experienced a higher level of stress in achieving a good study result. This is no doubt partly because many of them were enrolled on a higher and more difficult level of course of study and partly because of their high motivation to achieve good results. Selye defined stress as a general adaptation syndrome. In this sense there is no one who has no stress in their lives. The outcome depends on how effectively students can cope with the various difficulties and problems that they encounter. Japanese students are usually believed to be very positive and hard-working. The survey results agreed with this common notion.

New issues that came up more strongly in Stage 3 data were issues of boyfriend/girlfriend problems, obtaining a visa, and counselling. The problem of gossiping among co-national students/friends was also found to be more frequent and casual in nature, as detailed stories of problematic co-national students' relationships problems were told by a number of interviewees. Another example of high stress, which only affected a few students, was through problems coming from a part time job which was most clearly revealed by the follow-up interview investigation.

What the stress graphs showed was that there were many cases when the direct experience of high stress was a combination of exam or coursework, lack of English ability, 'not wanting to be defeated by others in the class', together with individual factors such as 'the noise of a guitar at midnight from the floor above, while a student is studying for the exam the following day.'

The results from the peaks of stress shown by the stress/time graphs (Table 11.9) were compared with those from the results of the survey showing the percentage of students choosing one of the two highest levels of stress for each of nine areas of difficulties identified by the survey. (Table 8.3) Here are the main findings:

(1) In the survey 44 % of respondents reported high levels of stress in dealing with financial problems. However in the stress/time graphs none of the 27 respondents gave this as a peak stress problem at any time during their stay in the UK. This suggests that for most students there was a strong feeling of unfairness about tuition fees rather than a major cause of stress affecting their life in the UK.

(2) The same result was true for leisure and hobby participation where again no student gave this as a peak stress on their graph, although 10% reported in the survey one of the two highest levels of stress.

(3) Academic problems, at level 4 or 5, cited by 71% of survey respondents was about the same level as shown by the 17 students out of 27 showing coursework peak stress and slightly lower than 22 students showing examination peak stress in the stress/time graphs.

(4) The 37 % of students, who reported anxiety or psychological problems in the survey, choosing positive 4 or 5 options, is slightly higher than 8 out of 27 students reporting these as peak stress problems on their stress/time graphs. Also 48 % of respondents to the survey reported that they felt much anxiety for the future.

(5) The 27 % of students with human relationship problems in the survey was about the same as the 7 students out of 27 reporting these as peak stress problems on their stress/time graphs.

(6) Culture related problems were identified by 5 students out of 27 as peak stress problems in the stress/time graphs slightly higher than 11 % giving these as serious problems in the survey.

(7) A small percentage of students (16 %) mentioned physical health problems in the survey which was twice as high as 2 out of 27 students who gave these as peak stress reasons on their graph.

In considering these comparisons it must be remembered that this is a comparison of an average of extremely and fairly stressful levels from the survey with peak stress levels on the stress/time graphs.

12.4. Comparison of findings with earlier research

Since this is the first time that there has been an investigation of the stress factors and coping strategies of Japanese students in UKHEIs, there is no directly comparable data set with which one can make comparisons. However, probably the best choice, described in Section 5.2, is Allen and Higgins' (1994) investigation (5.3.1) (3) of the motivations and experiences of 989 international students, including 43 from Japan, on UK undergraduate courses. When asked what was the most significant problem they had faced as international students, academic problems came first, followed by English language difficulties, financial problems and relationships problems in that order. This is the same order that was obtained as the highest stress order in the present research except that here

anxiety problems were slightly higher than those from human relationships. However Japanese students in the Allen and Higgins' (1994) study identified English, rather than academic, problems as the most severe ones they had faced with over twice the percentage of the international students who chose this option. More surprising was the fact that, at the time of their survey, Japanese students were those experiencing the greatest difficulties in human relationships, affecting 49% of them compared with 29% of the total sample. As was mentioned in Section 5.2, T. Yamamoto's (1986) study (Table 5.1.) of 96 Japanese students, studying in 9 different countries including the UK, also showed that difficulties in human relationships had the highest overall mean stress average of 2.92, followed by a language stress average of 2.89 and an academic stress average of 2.80. In the present survey the mean average stress score for human relationship problems was only 2.68, using the same 5 point scale as Yamamoto (1986), and the percentage of students saying human relationships were a serious problem was only 27%, almost the same as the 29% overall figure for international students in Yamamoto's study but much lower than the 49% of Japanese students in that survey. This comparison of relationships problems with the two most similar studies suggests that since the last two decades, Japanese students have become much more relaxed and confident in their relationships. This is not to say that there are now no serious problems in this area of experience. The stress/time graphs show 4 of the 27 students have peak stress levels for relationships problems which were greater for them than any other problem. The main survey showed relationships problems were a concern for a quarter of all the 285 respondents. Nevertheless there has been a very marked improvement in this area since those two earlier surveys.

There are many similarities in both the Japanese and Korean languages, as well as in their grammar-focused teaching methods, as explained in Section 5.2. It is therefore reasonable to compare Choi's (1997) research (Section 5.2.1.) about difficulties in English perceived by 47 Korean students studying in Australian universities with the present research. Two of the main difficulties found by Choi (1997) were 'using English in academic work' and 'using English in communication' which was slightly less stressful. Using the computer based factor analysis in the present research, English language difficulty in academic performance (M=3.53) was again found to be the highest factor group of stress, much higher than the English language difficulty for communication (M=2.67). A major problem identified by Choi (1997) was in using appropriate ways of expressing politeness, very

much the same problem as experienced by Japanese students in this research.

Amoh's (1984) research (5.3.1) (4) into international students' problems in one university in the USA found that the main difficulties were in three language-related academic problems. These were 'the ability to write English', 'giving oral reports in class' and 'writing course assignments'. The present study shows that stress from 'writing English' was significantly lower than that for 'giving oral reports in class' whilst the reverse was true in Amoh's study. This again was probably owing to the more grammar-orientated approach to English teaching in Japan compared with the USA or the UK.

Yao and Matsubara's (1990) study (5.3.1) (2) was unique in that they compared the problems of 192 international students living in Japan with 163 Japanese home students, using the same questionnaire. This survey identified 6 areas of stressful events for all respondents. Surprisingly all 6 were given higher stress scores by Japanese home students than by international students. This fact may be of help when considering the degree of stress sometimes acknowledged by Japanese students in the present survey. Japanese people do not hesitate to admit their weaknesses and failures.

Furnham and Alibhai (1985) (5.3.1) (6) studied the friendship network data of 140 international students from 35 different countries using 25 host-national controls. They found a strong preference by students for co-national friends first, other nationals second, and host-nationals third. When students were asked who would be their preferred companion for a range of everyday situations, co-nationals came first, then host-nationals and finally other nationals. In the present study it was found that Japanese students had an almost equal preference for co-national friends (39 %) and friends from other overseas nationalities (38 %) with British host-national friends in third place (23%). (See 8.7)

Tomioka (2001) (5.3.1) (7) investigated Japanese students after they had been overseas for less than two months and found that those who had made friends with a wide range of people gained more satisfaction from their overseas study. Research by Zimmerman (1995) (5.3.1) (8), with 107 international university students in the USA, also found that 'talking with American students' was the single most important factor in communication competency and adjusting to American life (p. 321).

There seems wide justification for the students' request to UKHEIs to do more to help in providing links between international and UK-national students. Some further studies, not available at the time of the survey, give recommendations and suggestions shown below.

Summers and Volet's (2008) article on 'Quantitative examination of students attitudes' following a mixed group work experience in Murdoch university, Western Australia, contained this strong recommendation: 'Our findings provides support for the view that universities should take measures to promote culturally mixed group assignment work in order to achieve the educational and social goal of internationalization.' (p.369) They also reported: 'Despite the increasingly multicultural nature of university campuses, the most typical pattern is one of minimal inter-action between students from different cultural backgrounds.' (p.357)

Wenli Wu (2006) presented a paper at the SCUTREA Conference held in Leeds about her study of East Asian international postgraduate students at one UK university. She found that 'the student-tutor relationship does not come out as a key aspect in resolving students' problems, as most of the students found other ways to cope with their life without much connection with their tutors. One of the students' successful strategies was by building up a community for peer support and information exchange.' The same idea is found in an ariticle by Nipoda's (2002) 'Japanese students' experiences of adaptation and acculturation of the UK'. She wrote: 'the Japanese student waits for the offer of help from the UK teacher and the UK teacher waits for the request from the students, thus misunderstandings are created.' (p.4)

Replies from respondents to the questionnaire, in the present research, show that less than one in twenty would consult someone about language problems. Just over one in ten would choose to consult someone about academic difficulties and only about one third of these would consult a tutor or teacher. As was mentioned in Chapter 9 councillors were rarely consulted about any of the students problems.

12.5. Conclusion

Japanese students in UKHEIs encountered various difficulties and problems which involved academic, language and socio-cultural areas of their experiences. The preliminary interview data with 35 Japanese students showed that they felt language problems were severest. However, they had already finished their courses prior to their interview and this may have affected their responses. In the main survey of 285 respondents, who were still mainly students at the time of the questionnaire, it was found that the severest difficulty was when academic and language problems intermingled. English language difficulty in academic performance was clearly the highest cause of stress. This was much higher than the English language difficulty for communication which contrasted with difficulties of Korean students studying in Australia where this was only slightly less stressful. Whilst the survey showed that the stress caused by financial problems was significantly high, this was not confirmed by the peak stress results revealed by the stress/time graphs. The stress caused by anxiety was higher than that from human relationships problems in contrast to the findings of an earlier survey. However, although stress caused by human relationships difficulties remained high, it was nevertheless much lower than that reported in an earlier survey of Japanese students. The socio-cultural problems were much more variable with many students having specific situations causing a high level of stress. In many cases problems and difficulties were found to be overlapping between more than two areas of experiences.

Stress graphs and case studies showed the clearest picture of how individual students were affected by and dealt with stress. This was very helpful in trying to fulfill a main aim of the research which was to understand and evaluate the perceptions of stress experienced by students. These detailed accounts of stress help to establish that students did not just experience great stress through examinations or coursework but also often in the breakdown of personal relationships and the problems of adaptation to life in a different environment. In Chapter Eleven seven cases were selected and described in details together with stress graphs. Each student had his/her own stories or episodes to relate.

Stress is ubiquitous and omnipresent. Multiple factors overlap and co-exist. A categorical approach defines both the shape and nature of respondents' answers. The qualitative

approach gives explanatory details and clarifications and this was why combining methods was important and necessary.

Although this research aimed to identify, both quantitatively and qualitatively, stress factors of Japanese students in UKHEIs, this did not, of course, mean that students' problems or difficulties were the only issues of international students' experiences. Positive aspects of stress, which Selye called 'eustress' must also be taken into consideration. The high satisfaction rate given by students to describe their study experience was indeed outstanding.

The next chapter will include a short summary and give an account of the main achievements of the research.

Chapter Thirteen. A Short Summary with Some Further Reflections.

'Caminante no hay camino. Se hace camino al andar." (=Traveller, there are no paths. Paths are made by walking.) **by Antonio Machado y Ruiz (1875 – 1939) in *Campos de Castilla***

'I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.' **(Dewey, 1897)**

13.1. Overall summary of the thesis

It is often said that school and university education is a preparation for life but the quality of that education, and the level of individual participation and commitment of students, is itself part of a life equally important as anything to be experienced in the future. The value of this research is determined by the extent to which it enhances our knowledge of Japanese students' perceptions of difficulties that they encounter in UKHEIs. The main aim of the research was therefore to concentrate attention on one particular aspect of the Japanese students' life, namely their experience of stress during their study in the UK together with any coping strategies that were adopted. There were no clearly defined paths to follow from earlier research or universal approval to provide a precise methodology and approach. As the research progressed a path was followed and only now, at the end of the journey, can one describe the exact route that was taken.

The aim of the research is to find an answer to the question **'what are the stress factors and coping strategies of Japanese students in UKHEIs?'** It started with an explanation of the motivation for, and the significance of the research, outlining research questions which needed to be considered together with a structure for the thesis. In all there were seven inter-related subsidiary research questions that were addressed. They can be found in Chapter 1, but a reminder of these aims should be included in this summary. They were:

(1) How should the terms 'stress' and 'coping strategy' be understood in the research?

(2) What can we learn from related research into the problems of both Japanese and international students?

(3) What methods and questions should be used in the research?

(4) What are the main problems and coping strategies of Japanese students in the UK?

(5) How do stress factors vary among groups of respondents?

(6) How are students' stress related to time factors throughout the stay in the UK?

(7) What other indicators of respondents' experiences are provided by their recommendations to future students from Japan and to UKHEI professionals?

It was first necessary to consider the first three research questions in order to give guidance and clarity in determining what research methods were to be used. The findings from these questions, together with the results of a preliminary survey and interviews with the help of 35 Japanese student participants, were used in designing a questionnaire to be used in a survey of the stress experienced by Japanese student respondents.

The first step was to find an adequate conceptual framework to use in investigating and describing both the stress and coping strategies of Japanese students. This showed how the term stress needs to be understood as one describing an intermediate, relational event between the challenges of the environment and the individual's response to it. This resulted in to the choice of terms such as 'stress factor', or 'stressor' and coping strategies as basic terminology for the investigation of students' problems and difficulties.

This led to an investigation of language, education and culture, especially from the viewpoint of how their relationships are theoretically explained. These three areas were accepted in the research as the three pillars of international students' experiences, assuming that Japanese students in the UKHEIs were most likely to experience problems and difficulties in these three often inter-related areas. Although it was decided that students' problems were to be explored in each of these three areas, it was known that actual problems often overlapped in two or three areas and that there would always be a possibility of problems occurring outside this broad range of students' experiences. An exploration of potentially conflicting ideas and practices, that sometimes occur in Japan-UK cross-cultural situations, was also carried out.

The next step was to consider the findings of previous research, and other literature giving relevant information, on overseas studies and international students. This phase of the research also included consideration of a brief account of the history of Japanese overseas study with particular reference to study in the UK.

Before finally deciding on the methodology of the research, including the design of investigative questionnaires for the student respondents, it was now important to examine previous research on problems and difficulties of international students, from many countries throughout the world, since there was no single study to be found that looked at Japanese students' stress factors in UKHEIs. This stage involved comparison of a few representative studies of earlier research from the viewpoints of both how these studies categorised international students' problems and also which categories of problems were identified and with what degree of seriousness. The problems and difficulties obtained from this literature review were then available for use in the main questionnaire of the research and incorporated whenever it was appropriate.

This naturally led to a decision time about the exact methods to be used in the research. It was decided that, in order to grasp the whole phenomenon holistically, it was essential to adopt both quantitative and qualitative approaches. As a result there were two major interview investigations and one large-scale questionnaire survey that were carried out in three stages of research.

The first stage was the preliminary interviews which involved 12 questions answered by 35 Japanese students who studied in UKHEIs. Next came the main questionnaire survey including 150 question items for each of the 285 respondents. Following this came the investigation and analysis of the data, which were obtained in these two stages of the research.

The causes and levels of experiences of stress were first examined and then the coping strategies used by students in their attempts to alleviate the stress. This was followed by recommendations to future UK Japanese students and to UKHEIs, some of which no doubt reflected on their own experience in the UK. At this stage there were fresh questions about

the statistical information about stress, arising from the replies to the questionnaire. In particular, how the levels of stress of a student were related to the time frame of their course in the UK and how interrelated were the different types of stress encountered by individual students. To meet this need for additional knowledge, follow-up interviews were carried out with 27 respondents given 12 specific questions, including two questions which involved a drawing by the students of a stress/time graph showing the levels and causes of stress throughout their whole course of study. These testimonies of individual students were a valuable contribution to the whole research since this gave flesh and blood to the skeletal picture of the questionnaire data. A final comparison of the three sets of data followed including factor analysis using a computerized statistical programme for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

All this investigation led to answers being provided by the students on their own perceptions of the degree of difficulty of stressful situations, their coping strategies, and the advice they chose to offer both to other future students from Japan and to UKHEI professionals. This provided answers to the four primary research questions given earlier in this section. It was then possible to compare some of these findings with earlier or more recent research when this was relevant to the aims of this research.

Now, finally, at the end of the path there is this short summary and consideration of how far this research has succeeded in meeting its aims and broken new ground, together with some suggestions about possible future research.

13.2. The main findings

In order to fully understand the stress experienced by Japanese students, it is necessary to reconsider the findings of Chapters 7 to 12. These chapters cover the statistical analysis of respondents' perceptions of stress and coping strategies together with the degree of each individual difficulty they encountered. However to understand more fully and holistically the overall experiences of an individual student, their own story, told through their stress/time graph and interview, gives a clearer and more accurate picture. Since a reasonably large number of students (285) were respondents to the main questionnaire it is hoped that the findings are fairly typical of all the Japanese students in UKHEIs. A brief

account of some of the more interesting findings is given below.

The most important motivational factors for studying in the UK were the desire to learn English and to find fulfillment for their personal interests, even more than to further their academic purposes. Most students received the necessary income from more than one source. Only one in three were completely financed by parents and only one in ten paid all their expenses themselves. Nearly all felt that their study in UKHEIs was worthwhile and that their English language had improved. About two thirds believed that their cross-cultural adaptation ability had increased, that they had become more able to challenge difficulties and that their awareness of their own Japanese identity had been strengthened. About half felt that they could make friends more easily now. On the other hand, nearly a half were anxious about their future, and were often frustrated and sometimes felt exhausted. This may be related to the encouragement in Japan for everyone to acknowledge their shortcomings and weaknesses.

By comparing the sums of the two highest degrees of stress perception it was found that academic difficulties caused the highest stress (71%), closely followed by language stress (65%). Financial concerns came third (44%) slightly higher than anxiety (37%). The stress caused by human relationships was lower (27%) as was stress caused by living conditions (26%). Physical health problems came next (16%) whilst stress caused by cultural factors was only 11 % and by leisure activities only 10%. (Table 8.3)

The most stressful experience was dealing with coursework or examinations (79%), followed by the difficulty of speaking English in class discussions (68%) or when making a presentation (66%). The stress from difficulties in writing English was slightly lower (58%) than speaking English probably related to the lack of emphasis on spoken English in Japan. (Table 8.5)

The use of an SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for the analysis of 48 stressful events, identified as stress factors 13 groups of common patterns of answers among the total 285 responses. English language difficulty in academic performance was found to be the highest factor group of stress (M=3.53) and interestingly higher than the English language difficulty in communication. (M=2.67) (Tables 12.5 and 12.6) The area of

experiences where Japanese students in UKHEIs faced the most severe stress was found to be when academic and language problems overlapped, such as in an oral presentation in a class, participation in discussions, taking examinations or writing coursework in English, or reading English quickly. It is therefore not completely accurate to give a simple answer that Japanese students feel the strongest stress either in the academic area, or with English language problems. The correct understanding is more complex. The three areas of experiences (language, academic and socio-cultural) were much better understood when these were investigated from a more individualized situational approach.

The mean comparisons between groups of respondents produced more complicated and interesting results than those which were expected at the start of the investigation. Comparison was made of the stress levels among groups of respondents according to their age, gender, field of study, past overseas travel experiences, level of English, and whether they took a pre-sessional course or not. Some results were just as expected and others were a surprise and quite contrary to the initial expectations. Students on Foundation, Certificate and Diploma courses had the highest level of stress probably related to their low English language ability. Those reading for a Natural Sciences qualification had the lowest level of stress (M=2.45), followed by Social Sciences (M=2.70) and Humanities students. (M=2.83) (Table 8.12)

The 25 -29 age group had the lowest average stress level and the 40 – 49 age group the highest. The 50 + age group had a much lower stress level for socio-cultural difficulties which may have been partly due to their increased maturity. (Table 8.8)

Students with an IELTS score for English language ability of 5.5 or less had a much higher average stress, whilst those with a score of 7.5 or more experienced less overall stress than other students. However these students, with the highest average English level, revealed the highest level of stress both in their efforts to gain a good assessment and also in making good progress. (Table 8.11) Possibly they were most conscientious about their ambitions to do well whilst other students were sometimes just concerned to reach the pass standard. Of course, their course requirements may have been most demanding in some cases.

The gender of students did not make any significant difference to the mean stress scores,

but male students had higher stress in understanding lectures and taking notes as well as when trying to cope with the high speed of spoken English. In the socio-cultural area of experiences Japanese female students had significantly higher stress with sanitation (cleanliness) issues and male students with food problems. (Table 8.9)

In general the mean stress level was found to fall as the length of previous study overseas increased. (Table 8.13) Students who had attended a pre-sessional course had a higher average mean stress than those who did not. (Table 8.15) This is probably because many of them had been required or encouraged to take a pre-sessional course because of their slightly lower academic or English ability. Nevertheless many students reported that they had found these courses to be very helpful and worthwhile. (See Appendix III)

In general, Japanese students in UKHEIs were found to be hard-workers; just as the common stereo-typical commentary often points out. This was clearly shown in their data depicting how they chose to cope with their problems and difficulties. Over 80 % of respondents chose to persist, keep trying, and to challenge themselves (*Gambaru* in Japanese) when facing language and academic problems. However, here again, a diverse difference of individual situations must also be taken into account. Only about 1 in 20 would consult someone about English language problems and only about double that number consulted someone with their academic problems. Human relationships difficulties were however most commonly dealt with by a strategy of consulting others. Counsellors were rarely asked for help and only students' relatives were less consulted. Problems caused by cultural differences had the least confrontational coping strategies of all problem areas. In general those who did not have a clearer coping strategy for a problem causing stress tended to regard this issue as more stressful than other problems. However one needs to remember that some stress for all students is not only essential but also beneficial, leading to a coping mechanism that is necessary in achieving their goals.

It must be remembered that if a student had experienced level 5 stress in only one area of experience, this is nevertheless the most important consideration for that student and to reveal this is one of the aims of the research. If this student experienced much less stress than level 5 in other areas, his or her average value for overall stress will be much lower but this is largely irrelevant in comparison with the high stress level experienced in one or more

particular areas. This is made very clear in any study of the stress/time graphs drawn by students.

Students clearly felt a need for more courses to help them with academic writing for coursework and examinations and doctorate candidates felt the same about help with writing their thesis. Nevertheless the great majority of students would recommend their UKHEI to other students wishing to come to the UK. Any help with bursaries or in visa extension applications would be greatly welcomed.

Almost all the students urged new students coming to the UK to have a clear sense of purpose, and to make a great effort to improve their understanding of English language before leaving Japan. This is no doubt sometimes reflected the hard lessons they had learned through their own experiences in the UK.

13.3. The main achievements of the research

(1) As was mentioned, in the introduction to this investigation, there has been very little research into the experiences of individual international students in UKHEIs. It is believed that this is the first research to consider either the stress experienced by Japanese students in their UK stay or their coping strategies. It is hoped that the research findings will help both in understanding the sometimes complex causes of stress and also in planning supportive procedures both in preparing and receiving Japanese students in the future.

(2) There was a good response by 332 volunteers willing to take part in the research. This included 35 students in the preliminary survey, 285 in the main survey, and 12 additional recruits for the follow-up interviews. 15 of the 285 main survey respondents also took part in the follow-up interviews. Their interest and commitment has been an outstanding feature displaying keenness both to explore and discuss their own perceptions as well as to compare them with those of other students by requesting access to details in the final research report.

(3) Some of the findings from this research have already been presented to seven conferences or study groups of research students and teachers in England, Scotland and

Japan. This has led to much discussion and interest in both the research methods used and also some of the main findings from the research.

(4) It is believed that this is also the first time that stress-time graphs have been used to examine, in greater detail, both the complexity of stressful experiences and their relationship to the time in a student's course that a particular stress occurred together with its estimated degree of severity. An extra dimension to the understanding of the perceived stress, revealed by the replies to the questionnaire, was obtained through follow-up interviews and especially through the examination of the stress-time graphs drawn by students.

The stress graphs drawn by 27 interviewees who participated in the follow-up research showed the complex nature of stress most clearly. There were many cases when interviewees drew their stress graphs with peaks indicating essay deadlines or exam submission time. However many of them also explained the main reason for stress peaks as due to other factors, such as lack of balance between study and part-time jobs, or a psychological reason from childhood family problems or through serious human relationships problems. It could just be a matter of noise from a guitar practice in the hall of residence keeping everyone awake at night which brought extra stress at the time of examinations. This showed that stress is a much more time-oriented notion, and the reason for a high level of stress was often because a student was facing more than one serious problem at that time. Categorical investigation by a large-scale survey was better understood if incorporated with verbal interview data, in which participants could describe more diverse and realistic feelings about their experiences over a period of time during their studies. In this sense the mixed method of qualitative and quantitative approaches adopted in this research was clearly a success. The stress graph is a very valuable tool and its adoption for the future research is strongly recommended in any investigation of similar topics.

(5) The research findings provide a data base that will be available for use in future research on stress both to consider other aspects of students' experiences, such as the background and origin of the students, and also to compare how far students of other ethnic origins have similar or different perceived experiences of stress whilst studying in the UK.

(6) These research findings for Japanese students also provide a basis for comparison both with earlier theories and examples of stress and also its most common causes for international students, the group about which earlier research has been mainly undertaken. For example, it is interesting that foreign students in Japan were found in earlier research to consult, only rarely, counsellors or advisors about any human relationships problems, whilst the present research shows that the same is true for Japanese students in the UK.

(7) Advice to future Japanese students in the UK has been provided by this research. It is hoped that the overall satisfaction of Japanese students with UKHEI courses will encourage others to study in the UK. 96 % of the respondents gave one of the highest 3 grades to estimate this satisfaction and less than 1 % reported no satisfaction. Other advice to have the maximum possible English language preparation, to have clear goals, and to be aware of the different cultural values and educational systems was almost unanimous. More general advice on how to cope with relationships and other language, academic and socio-cultural difficulties would certainly help students if given before they left for the UK. This is especially true of the need to overcome their reluctance to take part in class discussions and other seminars in the UK.

(8) Advice is also given to UKHEIs. Although it is probable that UKHEIs can do little about the high tuition fees for non-EU students, the research shows the very strong feelings that Japanese students expressed about this, as well as the stress that was often experienced by students who found it difficult to manage their budgets in the UK. On the whole, most students were very appreciative of the help they received from their teachers in the UKHEIs. Only a minority found it difficult to make contact with them. There were many requests for more general academic English writing courses to be provided by the universities for overseas students. It is also clear that there is an urgent need for universities to offer courses of study starting in April, especially for Asian students. This in turn could lead to a closer collaboration, including joint courses offered by universities in Japan and the UK. Universities might like to take note of the fact that students with the greatest overall stress were those with the lowest IELTS scores and it may be necessary to review more carefully the decision to accept them into the UKHEIs. Universities may also like to consider that sometimes there may be a need to train administrative staff, in the international office and

elsewhere, to be more understanding of the needs and anxieties of international students.

Two recent important publications from UKCOSA have offered useful advice to the staff of UKHEIs. 'Working with International Students' (Lago, 2003) is described by UKCOSA as a cross-cultural awareness training manual focused on aspects of academic, linguistic, and social life affecting international students studying in the UK. The training activities described include a broad sweep of issues and perspectives that reflect the complete experience of international students. 'International Students in Crisis: a Guide for Institutions' (Gaskin, 2002) has the aim of providing international student advisors with a range of practical resources, including a check list of issues to consider and models of good practice, as well as details of useful publications and organizational contacts for further information. The publication also stresses the role of institutional policy and procedures in dealing effectively with international students in crisis and the importance of ensuring that front- line staff are properly trained and supported in their work.

(9) At the present time in Japan there is a great debate on how best to improve the teaching of English language. It is hoped that teachers of English in Japan would benefit from knowledge about the Japanese students' experiences in the UKHEIs and, in particular, that they would appreciate the need to require English speaking tests as part of their entrance examination requirements. The study also drew attention to the need to give more help to their students in understanding some of the more important basic differences between Japanese and English culture systems, especially those involving linguistic differences. Training in inter-cultural skills would certainly aid adaptation.

(10) It is hoped that, when considering the research findings, counsellors in UKHEIs would take note of the reluctance of Japanese students to seek their help with stress problems in the UK. It may be, for example, that arranging a small tea-party for groups of overseas students in the university, at the start of their courses, might help to give the students more confidence in university counsellors, as well as providing an opportunity to meet students from similar backgrounds with whom they could form worthwhile friendships and support groups.

(11) Finally, there are the main finding of the research showing both the different causes of

stress experienced by Japanese students and also the degree of severity perceived by individual students for each type of stress as well as the coping strategies they adopted.

13.4. Suggestions for further research

Five key areas or issues that were discussed in Chapter 6.3 but not explored in any detail in this research were:

(1) In-depth comparison with students of other nationalities, both internationally and within Asia. It would be possible to use the same questionnaire as that used in the main survey for this comparison of the perceptions of stress. This would be of great help in trying to further determine how far national or regional factors influenced the degree of perceived stress in the UK.

(2) Origins of students (family and educational background, the urban / rural factor, etc.). How far do these individual factors affect a student's experience of stress?

(3) Financial problems of students. These did seem to cause problems for many students and may accelerate the trend for non-EEC students to continue their studies of English in their own countries.

(4) More detailed study of problems arising from the breakdown of personal relationships. Individual case studies show that this sometimes leads to experiences of very severe stress.

(5) A study of stress in relation to personality and character difference.

It is likely that all these issues would have revealed much useful detailed information about the Japanese students in UKHEIs. The last three were omitted mainly because they are highly personal subjects which require to be investigated with special sensitivity and a different overall approach.

Altbach (1991), in his literature review (Section 4.3), urged the need for more research from a student centered perspective, including consideration of their individual problems. He also stressed that future research should take into account the needs and perspectives of major sending nations. Since then there has been very little study of Japanese students in UKHEIs to meet Altbach's proposals. It is hoped that this research into the problems of one particular country, Japan, will be followed by research into other countries sending

significant numbers of students to UKHEIs. The questions and methods used could form a basis for comparison of results with other countries or merely be used to provide a starting point for devising appropriate questionnaires.

13.5. Final thoughts

The overall aim of this research was to examine the setbacks and difficulties of Japanese students as they followed their paths through UK higher education courses. There is, however, no overall blue-print for the path or way ahead that can be passed on to the next generation of students. Nor is there an easy set of answers, which will exactly equate to any situation, so that each student will need to find their own path in the particular circumstances of their stay. Although the research has, of necessity, been concerned with difficulties and stress factors it is important not to lose sight, in the educational experience, of the opportunities to be enriched by the 'life chances' made possible for students through their overseas studies. Comments by nearly all the students interviewed showed how much they had enjoyed life in the UK.

This is the first time that the stress and coping strategies of Japanese students in the UK has been investigated. The vastness and complexity of the areas involved, and the wide scope of the survey, as one person's self-funded investigation, inevitably means that complete answers could not be found for all the questions that arose. It is clear that even one area of experience, such as language or academic-writing difficulties, would have been worth spending a similar length of time on, with a similar energy or workload. However, the result would have been to produce a completely different thesis. The fact that the research considered three major areas of experience seemed to be a strength and the use of stress/time graphs also provided valuable information. If some stress factors were not investigated as fully as possible, then this was because of the vast area covered by the investigation. This leaves plenty of scope for further research.

The whole project was largely enabled by the students participating in the research, whose willingness to express their own experiences, including their own stressful feelings and coping strategies, made the research very worthwhile and rewarding. Their interest in and enthusiasm for the research were a great help. Hopefully most of the students gained from

recollecting and describing their problems and challenges, together with their reactions, during their study period in the UK. Their wholeheartedness in participating in this research was, in fact, a sign of their pioneering spirit with which they had left their home country, Japan.

Finally, it is the researcher's wish that ever-increasing number of students from Japan will benefit from studying in UKHEIs and that the bridge between the two countries will continue to grow stronger and broader.

Epilogue

Since the review of research literature in Chapter 4 there have been many important new studies about both the international students' voice and also the internationalization agenda of UK universities. It therefore seems appropriate to revisit this topic in an epilogue.

In 2004 UKCOSA reported on its survey of international students in UK universities, which was entitled '*Broadening our Horizons*'. The survey was the first attempt since that of Allen and Higgins (1994) to provide a wide ranging picture of the experiences of international students in the UK. The British Council had just produced a report 'Vision 2020' predicting that it is possible that there would be tripling of the number of international students coming to the UK over the next 15 years. UKCOSA explained that this presented a great challenge to UKHEIs if they were to improve or even maintain the current high satisfaction ratings given by respondents to their survey. This was a starting point for all concerned to review and develop the many processes, procedures, and services which affect the experiences of international students in the UK. It was important to provide adequate pre-arrival information for international students and not just assume sufficient prior knowledge of the UK. Home students should also be encouraged to mix more with international students in order to develop their sense of being global citizens ready to work in an increasingly globalised world. (ibid p.12)

Since carrying out the fieldwork, there has been a considerable amount of activity in the development of initiatives designed to support international students in UKHEIs. Knight (2007) in her Report for the OECD stated that 'the last decade has been a hotbed of innovation and new developments in international academic mobility'. (OECD 2007: 23) With this remarkable progress in the internationalisation of higher education both the government and universities in the UK have been determined to improve the international competitiveness of higher education. According to the British Council (2008) the UK national economy gains about 12.5 billion pounds per annum from this contribution. The Council also expressed some concern about the extent to which British universities are providing appropriate levels of academic and personal support for international students.

Schweisfurth and Gu (2009) wrote an article based on a 2 year multi method research project funded by UK Economic and Social Research Council, investigating the experiences of international undergraduate students in four UK universities. Their research findings challenged the notion that students' inter-cultural adaptation is linear and passive and point to the presence of a complex set of shifting associations between language mastery, social interaction, personal development and academic outcomes. It is the management of this amalgam, as well as the availability of differentiated and timely support which results in inter-cultural adaptation and the successful reconfiguration of 'identity'. The study showed that most international students managed to change, adapt, develop and achieve. (ibid p.14) The three greatest personal achievements reported by students were personal independence (67 %), broadened life experiences and interest (56 %), and improved inter-personal and communication skills (41 %). The same students reported that they had become more organized in managing their time for studies (73 %), more committed to their course of study (82 %), more confident about using a greater range of study skills (77 %), participating in small group discussions (71 %), and managing independent studies (72 %). (ibid p.12)

Alfred, Byram and Fleming (2003), lecturers at the University of Durham, edited a book *Intercultural experience and education.* Their stated aim was to extend the range of use of the concept of 'inter-culturality' to other domains of experience such as through drama, or music, or business with the aim of stimulating thinking about the educational value of intercultural experience in which one can learn to see things through the eyes of those from different cultures to our own. (ibid p.237)

Jones and Brown (2007), both teachers at Leeds Metropolitan University, published a practical book entitled *Internationalising Higher Education* in which they looked at the experiences of contributors who work with international students in a wide variety of contexts to try to decide what constitutes best practice. They identified 20 key factors (ibid p.195) in internationalizing higher education. These included the need for clear vision, from senior management, with a supportive institutional ethos, policies and strategies, engaging in international partnerships and providing a flexible and integrated international curriculum incorporating global perspectives. This necessitates a whole-institution approach with opportunities for staff to engage in international research, knowledge

exchange, and exchange programmes.

It is important that the views of staff members in the universities about the changes should be sought. Ninnes and Hellsten (2007), lecturers in Australian universities, edited a book called *Internationalizing Higher Education, Critical explorations of pedagogy and policy.* The book arose from ideas generated in an Asia-Pacific Region conference in Australia. One view about the internationalization of Australian higher education, with the third highest number of international students in the world, was that the introduction of managerialist practices has challenged and changed university structures and the nature of academic work. Academic autonomy had been lost as courses were developed and marketed centrally with an emphasis on cost minimization. Academic involvement in these activities came with a cost of added stress and other pressures leading to less time spent preparing for teaching, less personal time and scarce academic resources being consumed on non-academic activities.

However, an important new initiative in the UK came with a launch of the 'Teaching International Students' Project' in March 2010. This two-year project for teachers in Higher Education was set up by the Higher Education Academy in partnership with UKCISA. The project provides a resources bank, and a research data base, to help with the improvement of teaching and learning for international students in areas such as post-graduate supervision, group work, academic writing, language issues, and developing intercultural communication among all students. (Website: Higher Education Academy)

It seems clear that, despite the strong arguments and useful practical ideas in recent years for a change to greater internationalisation of education, progress has been slow. Although the staff training ideas from UKCOSA in recent years, which are reported in Chapter 13.3.(8) of this research, are excellent, they would involve a commitment of policies and resources that in a time of financial stringency sadly seems at present to be 'a bridge too far' for most UKHEIs.

At the beginning of Chapter 13 the research programme was compared to setting out on a journey on which there were no pre-ordained paths to follow, but where paths had nevertheless to be chosen after careful thought and planning as well as learning from the

experience of previous travellers. Two questions have been asked about this research journey. The first was about the main challenges that were encountered on the way and the second about the ways in which an insider perspective may have helped and hindered the richness and objectivity of the research.

The first really important challenge was to decide how to recruit volunteers as respondents to the survey. The Data Protection Act (1998) was a huge obstacle since HEIs were unable to let the researcher have names and course details of any prospective volunteers. Ideally a plan to identify a sample of students to fit the pattern of statistics provided by HESA would have been adopted. However, after receiving replies from volunteers in many HEIs, the help of other colleagues was sought to identify more students in categories not adequately represented. Finally a cohort of respondents was achieved, which was similar to that given by HESA (2001), as finally 285 volunteers participated in the main questionnaire. This problem of identifying a sample similar to that supplied by HESA arose again when identifying 27 volunteers for in-depth interviews when again an attempt was made to recruit students from shortage groups such as young male science graduates.

Another considerable challenge was to discuss stress time graphs drawn by all 27 volunteers without showing any bias or encouragement for stress levels identified by students. It was also important to use the same explanation for all students about what was required from them. Despite the great challenge this was probably one of the most valuable results from the research in giving a more detailed and accurate picture of stress levels experienced by students. The researcher's limited previous experience of using statistical methods of analysis caused to a further challenge. Fortunately the university was able to provide a number of very helpful courses and all the statistical analyses in the research were checked by a university teacher of Statistics.

The second question asks how far it is likely, because the present researcher was Japanese, a current post-graduate research student and a former university teacher in Japan, that these factors would have had a beneficial or detrimental influence on both the findings and the interpretation of their significance. It is true that the culture from which individuals come clearly affects the way they communicate and it is helpful to look at an earlier study of inter-personal communication. Miller and Steinberg (1975) explain that 'when people

communicate, they make predictions about the effects, or outcomes, of their communication behaviors; that is, they choose among various communicative strategies on the basis of predictions about how the person receiving the message will respond. Knowledge about another person's culture, its language, dominant values and prevailing ideology, often commits predictions of the person's probable response to certain messages'. (ibid p.7)

Most of the research into the problems encountered by international students in the UK has been carried out by teachers in UKHEIs and survey questions have nearly always been in English. It can be argued that since the research findings were to be in English, it would not have helped clarity of expression and understanding if the questions had been translated into all the native languages of the respondents. The questionnaire used in the present research could have been given in English. It would then have been simpler to analyze without the need for translation but it is likely that it would also have reduced the number of research participants. Since the researcher shared a common culture and language with the respondents it seemed more straightforward to use Japanese in all the communicative strategies that were adopted with the clear advantage that they would find it easier to respond. It was also hoped that this would generate data of a greater depth and richness.

Okabe (1983) in commenting on the Japanese language contended that, while English is a person-oriented language stressing informality and symmetrical power relationships, Japanese is a status-oriented language emphasizing formality and a-symmetrical power relationships. (ibid p.36, 37) While this observation may be criticized as being an oversimplification, nonetheless, because Japanese culture is very different from British, it can be argued that it becomes even more important to understand these rules in inter-personal communication.

There is also the question of the intention of any survey as seen by a respondent. This could be perceived differently by students depending on whether they were responding to a Japanese or a British researcher. The question might easily arise whether a British researcher would be more concerned with future recruitment of international students and the fees that brings to HEIs rather than seeking improvement to teaching methods and facilities primarily to benefit students and minimize possible stress. There is, of course,

also the possibility that some respondents may have wished to help a researcher, who was also a Japanese fellow student, by being more ready to admit a high level of stress when answering specific questions in the survey questionnaire. One regret is that the researcher was unable to compare research findings with the actual performance of the Japanese students in classroom activities and their results in course assessments and examinations. This could have provided more solid evidence of some of the causes of stress. This could have been more easily achieved by research in a limited number of HEIs and would have provided some objective information to add to the largely subjective data. It would also have been helpful to have had the opinion of the course teachers about their own perception of the performance by Japanese students and their views about what more could be done to help future students to deal with some of their stressful experiences.

Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) argued that analysis of qualitative cross-cultural data should involve bi-cultural or ideally multi-cultural team efforts, multi-cultural interpretation, and multi-cultural analytical processes. They point out: 'where multiple-methods are used to obtain information one can never be certain about the issue of "validity" because the data may often appear to be different but also compatible. They then asked the question 'How do we compare the respondents' symbols and definitions of the social situation with those of the social groups that provide those conceptions in order to more fully understand the meaning of responses to research questions?' (ibid p.232)

This of course describes an ideal system of analysis for research. There is, however, a great shortage of multi-lingual or even bi-lingual researchers and it would be difficult to pay for their services in most research projects. It can be argued that a close analysis of the present research findings, both from the survey and the interviews, reveals a richness and depth of data that was considerably helped by the insider status of the researcher, although it would clearly have been an advantage to have included some feedback from course tutors about the progress and problems of their Japanese students. A major advantage in this research, which was carried out entirely in Japanese, was the consistency of translation into English since it was all carried out by one researcher. All the explanations given in the survey and interviews were given in Japanese so that it can be argued that the optimum chance of respondents sharing the same interpretation of the meaning of questions was likely to be achieved. I hope that the reader will forgive any imperfections.

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Appendices

Appendix I. Summary of related studies and articles

Author(s) (Year) J =written in Japanese	Subjects / Method	Topics	Results	Remarks
Lysgaard, S. (1955)	200 Norwegian Fulbright grantees in USA / interview	Adjustment in a foreign society. (educational and personal areas) Adjustment as a process over time.	General tendency of coherence. U-curve result over time	'Adjustment' is undefined, but is used here as 'respondents' subjective reports on their feelings of satisfaction'
Oberg, K (1960)	(US missionaries in Brazil) / Descriptive	Culture shock	The nature, symptoms of, and recovery from, culture shock	Seminal work. Culture shock is considered as a kind of disease.
Bochner, S. (1977)	30 foreign students at the Univ. of Hawaii	Friendship patterns of overseas students: A functional model (I)	Foreign students considered to belong to three social networks, co-nationals, host nationals, and multi-nationals, with each serving different functions	Contradicting results found in Kudoh (2002) later, cited in this list.
Furnham, A. and N. Alibhai (1985)	140 /165 foreign students from each continent belonging to the London University	The friendship networks of foreign students: a replication and extension of the functional model.	The friendship network data revealed a strong preference for co-national friends first, other nationals second and host nationals third.	
Pugh, S. and J. Fenelon (1988)		Integrating learning, language, and intercultural skills for international students		"Foreign students entering univs. in any country have a threefold adjustment to make: linguistic, educational, and cultural." (P.310)

Westwood, M. and M. Barker (1990)	Total of 194 overseas students from 1984 to 87. Longitudinal Study in Canada and Australia	Academic achievement and social adaptation among international students : a comparative group study of the peer-pairing program	"The results reveal that overall achievement rates are higher and drop-out rates lower for those who participated in this matching program of first-year students with host national students.	"The literature available on international student adaptation is al-most unanimous in suggesting that intern'l students want and need social contact with people in the host country." (P.253)
Kagan, H. and Cohen, J. (1990)	159 university students including 92 internationals / Postal questionnaire	Cultural adjustment of international students	The main findings suggest that cultural adjustment is simul-taneously affected by the employment level, the language spoken at home, having both American and native friends, internal decision making and work value.	
Yao., S. and T. Matsubara (1990)	192 overseas students in Japan and 163 Japanese students Questionnaire	A study of the stresses of foreign students, (1) focusing on daily life stressors.	45 kinds of life stresses were analysed. Stresses that foreign students felt more than J students were (1) high price commodities, (2) failure in getting a scholarship, (3) un-stable political situation in own country, (4) graduation, (5) the form of teachers' lecture, (6) lack of communication with local residents.	
Rohrlich, B. (1991)	250 US students who studied abroad and returned. / Questionnaire Longitudinal	Host country and re-entry adjustment of student sojourners	"The highest concern was for housing, extra-curricular travel and making friends."	7 hypotheses tested.

Hammer, M. (1992)	Research reviews	Research, mission statements, and international student advising offices	(Four lines of research concerns are identified.)	
Matsubara, T. and T. Ishikuma (J) (1993)	39 advisory office for foreign students in 22 universities, Questionnaire	A study on Counselling and Guidance of Foreign Students in Japan with Case histories	The major areas where foreign students frequently seek help are language and finance while they rarely see counsellors or advisors about their human relationship problems.	
Furukawa, T. and T. Shibayama (1993)	123 Japanese adolescents studying abroad in home stay programmes for 1 year. Questionnaire. Longitudinal.	Predicting maladjustment of exchange students in different cultures: a prospective study	Among the variables assessed before de-parture, three factors emerged as strong predictors of mal-adjustment: neuroticism, the nature of maternal care before age 16, and friendship availability at home.	
Tanaka, T. Takai, J, Takaya, K, and T. Fujihara (1994)	237 students of various national backgrounds enrolled in 7 universities in Japan. / Interviews and Questionnaire	Adjustment patterns of international students in Japan	Asian subjects general-ly were less well adjusted than Western and Latin students. U-curve patterns not evident. Those more proficient in Japanese did not always adjust more easily. And scholarship recipients adjusted better than others.	
Sorimachi, A. (J) (1994)	134 Japanese high school students returned from overseas study programmes / Questionnaire Longitudinal	Subjective feelings of Cultural Adjustment among junior high school students returning from Foreign countries.	"All participants ex-perienced counter culture shock when returning."	

Furukawa, T. and T. Shibayama (1994)	188 Japanese high school students / Questionnaire Longitudinal	Factors Influencing Adjustment of High School Students in an International exchange Program		Competence in the language of the host country is influential in the adjustment into that community (Berry and Kim, 1987; Church, 1982; Mavreas and Bebbington, 1990)
Liberman, K. (1994)	680 Asian commentators / subjects interviewed	Asian student perspectives on American university instruction	Freedom of choice in the course and democratic structure of teacher-student interaction are appreciated. Informality and lack of respect are criticised.	
Zimmermann, S. (1995)	101 international students in a university in the Midwest, USA. / Interviewed by US students	Perceptions of intercultural communication competence and international student adaptation on an American campus	...talking with American students was the single most important factor in perceptions of communication competency and adjustment to American life.	Emphasis on communication. "What "counts" as evidence, logic, and argument are often culture bound.
Furnham, A and S. Redmann (1995)	96 multi-national sojourners / questionnaire	Psychological and socio-cultural variables as predictors of adjustment in cross-cultural transitions	"It was found that culture-specific predictors were closely connected to psychological variables."	
Ward, C., Okura, Y., Kennedy, A., and T. Kojima (1998)	35 Japanese students in New Zealand / Questionnaire Longitudinal study(4 times)	The U-curve on Trial: A longitudinal study of psychological and socio-cultural adjustment during cross-cultural transition	U-curve not identified. Adjustment problems were greatest at entry point and decreased over time.	Students lived in the same area as a group.

Tomioka, N. (J) (2001)	83 Japanese students between ages of 19 and 30 (+ 6 over 30) who went abroad for study less than 2 months. Questionnaire.	Social relationships and evaluation of overseas study by Japanese students who joined short study-abroad programmes	More satisfaction gained by those who made friends with the wider range of people, etc.	
Kudo. K. (J) (2002)	6 Japanese students in Australian universities / case study Quantitative / Interview & observation	Re-considering Bochner's functional model of friendship-networking	3 types of friendships and their identity patterns recognised – co-nationals, host-nationals and multi-national friends.	Bochner's functional model is amended.

Appendix II. The Survey Questionnaire

The Overseas Study Experiences of Japanese Students in the UK

Part 1

This questionnaire is originally written in the Japanese language. This is a translation which does not show the actual space available for answers.

The questionnaire aims to investigate study abroad experiences of Japanese students studying in the UK. I would like to ask you about your motivation for overseas study, your present situation, any possible difficulties and stresses you are facing, and how you are coping with them.

Oversea study opportunities are now increasing all over the world. In order to make such overseas study experiences more beneficial for Japanese students, and also to help UK institutions develop better hosting systems, your experiences and opinions are valuable. I am very grateful for your participation in this research, which will be used for a PhD dissertation for the Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University.

The data you provide will be treated with the greatest care, in order to protect your privacy. No names of students or UK academic institutions will be published. However I may need to contact some of you again for any further clarification of your views, which may be necessary. Also to send you the results of the summary if these would interest you.

Should you wish to contact me, please use the following address.

Address: UK Ms. Michiya Ashikaga PhD.Candidate
c/o Westminster Institute of Education,
Oxford Brookes University, Harcourt Hill Campus,
Oxford, OX2 9AT, UK.
Email: michiyaa@hotmail.com

Section A: About yourself

A.1. About yourself

1.1. Name: _____

1.2. Sex (Circle): Female / Male

1.3. Date of birth: _____ (month) 19_____ (year)

1.4. E-mail address: _____

1.5. Can you use Japanese for your email address above? < Yes / No >

1.6. Family (Circle.):

(a) Do you have a spouse? Yes No (Currently living together? - Yes / No)

(b) Do you have a child/children? Yes / No (Currently living together? - Yes / No)

A.2. About your course of study

2.1. Place of study. Fill in the name of the University, Department, and field of study.

(a)University of _____

(b)Department or School of _____

(c)Field of Study _____

2.2. Degree to be awarded on successful completion of your course.<Circle one.>:

B.A. / B.Sc. / M.A. / M.Sc. / M.Phil. / Ed.D / PhD / Diploma / Other_____

2.3. Date of arrival at UK for present course_____(month) _____(year)

2.4. Date of completion of course:_____ (month) _____(year) (or, scheduled to be)

A.3. Financial condition

Where are the sources of your budget? (Check all applicable answers.)

(1) ( ) Family

(2) ( ) Your own savings

(3) ( ) Part time job in the UK

(4) ( ) Scholarship (Japan)

(5) ( ) Other scholarships

(6) ( ) Other (Give details, please: _____)

A.4. Work experience

4.1. Have you been in full time employment? (Circle.) < Yes / No >

4.2. If Yes, how long did you work and in what sort of employment?

(For example, I was a teacher for 3 years, or worked for a company for 10 months.)

A.5. Your educational background

5.1. The Japanese educational course you last attended (Circle one.):

Senior high school/ Junior college / University (B.A.)

Diploma / Qualification to take university entrance exams

Post-graduate studies. / Others (_____)

5.2. How did you learn English in Japan? (Circle any number(s) applicable to you from (1) to (7) below, and fill in the details.):

(1). Only at main schools

(2). Private English language school and/or private crammer

(3). Home tutor and/or distance learning

(4). Correspondence by letter or email

(5). Contacts with native speakers of English since childhood

(6). TV or radio, film, or English language newspaper

(7). Others _____

5.3. Your trips abroad in the past (except overseas study): Circle one.

(a). This overseas visit is my first trip abroad.

(b). This overseas visit is:

the second / the third / the fourth or more for me.

5.4. Have you ever studied abroad before this time? < Yes / No > (Circle.)

If Yes, fill in details below.

How many times have you studied abroad? Total length of stay.

_____ year(s) _____ months(s)

5.5. Have you attended any pre-sessional courses before your present course?

< Yes / No > (Circle.)

If Yes, fill in the details below, for one or two course. Circle one to show how far it helped you.

Name of the course [ ]

Length of the course.

Content of the course.

Very helpful Fairly helpful. Not sure. Not very helpful. Not helpful at all.

Name of the course [ ]

Length

Content of the course.

Very helpful; Fairly helpful. Not sure. Not very helpful. Not helpful at all.

5.6. Please give the results of English tests you took in the past. (You may give more than one answer. Circle both the test and the score.

Date of test (Month / Year)

(a)IELTS Less than 5 ; 5.5 ; 6; 6.5; 7 ; Over 7.5

(b)TOEFL Less than 450; 451-500; 501-550; 551-600; Over 601

(c)TOEIC Less than 500; 600; 700; 800; Over 900

(d)Eiken (English Proficiency Test in Japan)

Grade 3; Grade linked to 2; Grade 2; Grade linked to 1; Grade 1

(e)Other (Specify)

Score or grade

A.6. Your motivation to study abroad

6.1. This question concerns your motivation for studying in the UK. For each Factor below, choose a number from 1 to 5, where 5 is the most applicable case for you.

1 …….	2 …….	3……	4 ……	5
Not at all Applicable	Not so applicable	Neither yes nor no	Fairly applicable	Most applicable

(1) ( ) In order to improve my present work skills or position in Japan.

(2) ( ) In order to get another / better employment in future.

(3) ( ) For mainly academic interest

(4) ( ) To pursue my personal interests (e.g. hobbies or my own tastes)

(5) ( ) To learn or improve my English

(6) ( ) To know more about UK culture and people

(7) ( ) To change my life course to a new direction.

(8) ( ) Because it is safer, more beneficial, and higher in quality in the UK than in other English speaking countries.

(9) Others. (Write in detail please.) _____

6.2. When you accepted your present place of study, how far were the following statements applicable? Choose 5 for the most applicable answer and 1 for the least applicable one.

1 …….	. 2 …….	3 ……	4 ……	5
Not at all Applicable	Not so applicable	Neither yes nor no	Fairly applicable	Most applicable

(1) ( ) This was the place/department of my first choice.

(2) ( ) I knew friends and/or teachers at this university before coming here.

(3) ( ) There were people who were opposed to my overseas study.

(4) ( ) I decided to come here with enough information about this place of study.

(5) ( ) It took me a long time to decide about my overseas study.

A.7. Your present situation

7.1. What is your current accommodation? <Circle one.>:

University Hall / Flat / Home stay / House sharing

Other ( )

How far are you satisfied with your current accommodation? <Circle one.>

Very satisfied. / Fairly satisfied / Not sure. / Slightly dissatisfied.

/ Very dissatisfied.

With which features are you satisfied or dissatisfied in your present accommodation?

Satisfied with / Dissatisfied with

7.2. What nationality is your closest friend in the UK?

_____

7.3. How often do you make contact with your family and friends in Japan?

1. More than once a day
2. A few times a week (every other day)
3. Once a week to a few times a month
4. About once a month
5. Once in a few months
6. About once in half a year
7. Less than once a year
8. None

Telephone / Letters / Parcels / Emails (Circle.)

Section B: Your experiences of stress (9 main areas)

<u>B.1. Degree of difficulty or stress.</u>

How difficult, or stressful do you find the ten areas below are in your overseas study? Answer each of all areas by using a 5-degree scale below.

Choose 1 for a very easy and 5 for a very stressful area.

1	.....	2	.....	3	.....	4	.....	5
Very stressful		Fairly stressful		Medium stress		Slightly stressful		Very little stress

(1) ( ) English language

(2) ( ) Academic work (in general).

(3) ( ) Living conditions (e.g., clothes, food, housing)

(4) ( ) Human relationships (teachers, classmates and others)

(5) ( ) Leisure and hobby activities

(6) ( ) Culture, customs, and habits

(7) ( ) Financial situations

(8) ( ) Physical health conditions

(9) ( ) Psychological conditions

(10) Other stress factors. (Please describe anything you find very difficult or stressful beside those mentioned above.)

_____

Section C: Coping with your problems

C.1. Coping strategies

How do you cope with following experiences if you find them stressful? Please choose one out of six options given below which you feel most applicable for each of the options that follow.

1. [challenge myself / persist / try harder / keep making efforts]
2. [compromise / postpone / dodge]
3. [escape / ignore / try to forget / give up]
4. [consult someone]
5. [have no problems]
6. Take other coping ways (Give details using the space after the sentence, please. For example, drink alcohol, go shopping, or sleep.)

(1) ( ) English language

(2) ( ) Academic situation (in general).

(3) ( ) Living conditions (i.e., clothes, food, housing etc.)

(4) ( ) Human relationships (teachers, classmates and others.)

(5) ( ) Leisure and hobby activities

(6) ( ) Culture, customs, and habits.

(7) ( ) Financial conditions

(8) ( ) Physical health conditions

(9) ( ) Psychological conditions;

(10) Other stress factors. (Please describe anything you find very difficult or stressful besides those mentioned above.)

C.2. Relationships

How far are the following statements applicable to you in your experiences of study in the UK? Choose 5 for the most applicable answer and 1 for the least applicable one.

1 ……. 2 ……. 3 …… 4 …… 5

Not at all Applicable | Not so applicable | Neither yes nor no | Fairly applicable | Most applicable

(a) ( ) I often study with someone else.

(b) ( ) I am often with friends.

(c) ( ) I have many friends of various nationalities.

(d) ( ) I have many Japanese friends.

(e) ( ) I get help from many people in my student life in the UK.

C.3. Person to consult

When you have problems, whom do you ask for help first of all? Choose one for each case in academic, language, and socio-cultural difficulties.

My family / A Japanese friend / A teacher (personal/course tutor)

An English friend / A fellow international student / A counsellor

A landlady or landlord / A relative / Other(s) _____

Academic Problem ( )

English language problem ( )

Socio-cultural problem ( )

C.4. Self-observation

How far are the following statements applicable to you in your experience of study in the UK? Choose 5 for the most applicable statement and 1 for the least applicable one, and answer each of all the following statements.

1……2……3……4 ……5

Not at all Applicable | Not so applicable | Neither yes nor no | Fairly applicable | Most applicable

(a) ( ) I am happy about my overseas study in general.

(b) ( ) I feel quite nervous every day.

(c) ( ) My overseas study experiences are worthwhile.

(d) ( ) My effort is not enough.

(e) ( ) I am exhausted.

(f) ( ) I often become ill.

(g) ( ) I feel very lonely.

(h) ( ) I often feel frustrated.

(i) ( ) I am anxious about my future.

Section D: Advice to others and self-assessment of progress

D.1. Advice to other Japanese students

Please give your advice to the following two groups of questions by choosing a number from five scales below, where 5 means definitely yes・and 1 means definitely no.

1 ·····	2 ·····	3 ·····	4 ·····	5
Definitely no	Rather no	Unable to say	Rather yes	Definitely yes

A group: Questions from other / future overseas Japanese students.

(a) ( ) Is it easier to study English in the UK than in Japan?

(b) ( ) I am not sure of my English ability. Is it all right if I go for study-abroad?

(c) ( ) Do you think it is worthwhile to go for study-abroad, even if I borrow money?

(d) ( ) Should I take a pre-session language course?

(e) ( ) Should I speak out in the classroom even though I make lots of mistakes?

(f) ( ) I am not confident in my ability. Can I follow the UK academic level?

(g) ( ) Will teachers and friends be supportive at your institution?

(h) ( ) Should I call my teachers by their first names?

(i) ( ) Is it possible to enjoy my life overseas while having a heavy work load?

(j) ( ) Should I restrict my contact with other Japanese during my overseas study?

(k) If you have any other advice to future students from Japan, please give details.

B group: Questions from UK institutions

(a) ( ) Is our institution good enough to receive students from abroad?

(b) ( ) Should we provide more courses on training for academic skills?

(c) ( ) Do our English language pre-session courses work well?

(d) ( ) Should we improve our curriculum and courses for foreign students?

(e) ( ) Do you think foreign students' fees should be reduced?

(f) ( ) Is the information service inside our institution good enough?

(g) ( ) Does our foreign students' advisory office provide good service?

(h) ( ) Are you content with your decision to come to this institution?

(i) ( ) Are you satisfied with the result of your assessment and its methods?

(j) ( ) Would you recommend any other Japanese student to come to this institution?

(k) If you have any other advice or opinion for your institution, please give details.

D.2. Improvement of your English language ability

Do you think your English ability (in general) has improved since you started your overseas study in the UK? <Circle one, please.>

(a) I think it has greatly improved.

(b) It has improved reasonably well.

(c) I do not think it has improved very much.

(d) There is no improvement at all.

D.3. The growth and change of yourself.

Are there any ways in which you find yourself different after you started studying in the UK? Choose 5 for the most applicable statement and 1 for the least applicable one, and answer each of all the following statements please.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all Applicable	Not so applicable	Neither yes nor no	Fairly applicable	Most applicable

(a) ( ) I became more able to challenge difficulties.

(b) ( ) My academic skill has improved and I gained a lot of new knowledge.

(c) ( ) I can make friends with people more easily.

(d) ( ) My English has improved very much.

(e) ( )My cross-cultural adjustment ability has increased.

(f) ( ) My personality became more cheerful and outgoing.

(g) ( )I became more confident in my own ideas.

(h) Other change. If you find yourself different in other aspects, please describe in detail.

D.4. Conclusion

How far are you satisfied with your study abroad life? Try to decide your degree of satisfaction by choosing one figure from 5 (greatest satisfaction) to 0 (no satisfaction).

< 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 - 0 >

D.5. Date of completion of this questionnaire

_____(date)_____ (month) 200 ___ (year)

Part 2 - Levels of stress (48 experiences)

Date of completion of this questionnaire; _____ (date) _____ (month) 200 ___ (year)

Email address; _____@_____

Question : Do you find your academic, language and socio-cultural experiences are stressful, or not, while you are studying in the UK? Choose between 1 to 5 when 5 is 'Extremely stressful' and 1 is 'Very little stress' and answer each of all the following items please.

1	2	3	4	5
Very little stress	slightly stressful	Medium stress	Fairly stressful	Extremely stressful

Academic experiences

(1) ( ) Obtaining admission
(2) ( ) Adjusting to new methods of teaching
(3) ( ) Acquiring new study skills
(4) ( ) Understanding course requirements
(5) ( ) Dealing with examinations and coursework.
(6) ( ) Gaining good assessments
(7) ( ) Making oral presentations in the classroom
(8) ( ) Participating in group discussions
(9) ( ) Making progress in your study
(10) ( ) Relationships with fellow students
(11) ( ) Relationships with teachers
(12) ( ) Using libraries
(13) ( ) Gaining access to necessary data and books for references
(14) ( ) Obtaining necessary information about course / class changes
(15) ( ) Paying the course fees
(16) ( ) Getting support and understanding from family or friends in Japan.
(17) Other academic stresses you are encountering. Please give details

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English language experiences

(1) ( ) Writing English
(2) ( ) Reading English
(3) ( ) Speaking English in front of many people
(4) ( ) Understanding lectures and taking notes
(5) ( ) Understanding questions or opinions by other students during classes
(6) ( ) Participating in group discussions by asking questions or expressing opinions
(7) ( ) Daily conversations with friends and teachers
(8) ( ) Reading newspapers and watching TV or movies
(9) ( ) Talking on the telephone (in English)
(10) ( ) Making a complaint, arguing or claiming in English

(11) ( ) Daily communication outside campus (e.g. when shopping, or on a bus)

(12) ( ) The speed of English

(13) ( ) Understanding varieties of English

(14) ( ) Asking for proof-reading

(15) ( ) Lack of opportunity of using Japanese (including books and PC)

(16) ( ) Too much use of Japanese

(17) Other English language stresses you are encountering. Please give details:

Social experiences

(1) ( ) Making friends

(2) ( ) Finding good accommodation

(3) ( ) Getting used to new / different food

(4) ( ) Getting used to UK weather

(5) ( ) Meeting new people other than Japanese

(6) ( ) Feeling homesick (missing your friends and family)

(7) ( ) Taking procedures in a bank, police, hospital or offices. (Mark any.)

(8) ( ) Dealing with financial procedures

(9) ( ) Maintaining health

(10) ( ) Different ideas of sanitary habits

(11) ( ) Theft or damage to your belongings

(12) ( ) Anxiety for the future

(13) ( ) Social isolation or loneliness

(14) ( ) Racial discrimination

(15) ( ) Gossiping among Japanese

(16) ( ) Postal and other delivery services

(17) Other stressful socio-cultural experiences you have. Please give details

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Appendix III. Description of the data

1. Personal Profiles

(The highest % is shaded.)

Profiles of respondents	Scales / groups						Total
Sex	**Female 201 (70.5%)**		Male 82 (28.8%)		N/A 2 (0.7%)		285
Age	20 or younger	20~29	30~39	40~49	50 or older	N/A	285 (Mean 28.95)
	2 (0.7%)	**168 (58.9%)**	90 (31.6%)	11 (3.9%)	6 (2.1%)	8 (2.8%)	
Family	Spouse / yes	Spouse / No	Living with family / yes	Living with family / No	N/A		285
	33 (11.6%)	**249 (87.4%)**	19 (6.7%)	14 (4.9%)	3 (1.1%)		
Previous employment (full-time only)	Yes.		No.				285
	119 (41.8%)		**166 (58.2%)**				
Finance	(1) From Family only	(2) From own savings only	(3) From scholarship only	(4) From current job only			128 (45%)
	88 (30.9%)	31 (10.9%)	9 (3.2%)	0			
	Answers that include (1)	Answers that include (2)	Answers that include (3)	Answers that include (4)			Multiple answers
	124 (43.5%)	113 (39.6%)	65 (22.8%)	50 (17.5%)			
Previous Education	Post-graduate	Univ-ersity	Junior College/ Diploma	Senior high / equivalent	Junior high and primary	N/A	285

	50 (17.5%)	**145 (50.9%)**	21 (7.4%)	58 (20.4%)	10 (3.5%)	1 (0.4%)	
Overseas travel experiences	First time	2nd time	3rd time	4th time	5th or more		285
	30 (10.5%)	49 (17.2%)	30 (10.5%)	26 (9.1%)	**149 (52.3%)**		
Previous study-abroad experiences	Yes.		No.		N/A		285
	170 (59.6%)		114 (40.0%)		1 (0.4%)		
Length of past study abroad	More than 6 years	4~5.8 years	2~3.5 years	1~1.5 years	1.5~11 months	Less than 1 month	None (zero)	285 (N/A = 1 0.4%)
	8 (2.8%)	18 (6.3%)	24 (8.4%)	34 (11.9%)	45 (15.8%)	41 (14.4%)	**114 (40.0%)**	
English ability (Based on self-report, time of exam varied.)	(1) IELTS >7.5, TOEFL >630	(2) IELTS 7.5>7, TOEFL 630>600	(3) IELTS 7>6.5, TOEFL 600>550	(4) IELTS 6.5>5.5, TOEFL 550>500	(5) IELTS <5, TOEFL <500	N/A		285
	38 (13.3%)	59 (20.7%)	**86 (30.2%)**	68 (23.9%)	24 (8.4%)	10 (3.5%)		
Past experience of learning English in Japan	Main school	Private English language school / *juku*	Home tutor or distance learning	Pen-pals / e-mails	Contact with native speakers	From TV, radio, and/or movies	Others	N/A=1
Single answers data	**43**	39	1	1	4	1		
Multiple-choice	**242**	143	46	78	50	98	44	

Notes:
1. Previous overseas study experience includes short-term language training trips.
2. Previous experience of employment question asked only about full-time jobs.
3. English ability is coded afterwards according to the students self-report. The period of taking English tests varies before overseas study to in-course exam.
4. All Japanese students study English in the main school.

2. Motivation for overseas study

(The highest % is shaded.)

Motivation	5. Most applic-able	4. Fairly applic-able	3. Neither yes nor no	2. Not so applic-able	1. Not at all ap-plicable	N/A	Mean (S.D.)
In order to improve my present work skills or position in Japan.	35 (12.3%)	32 (11.2%)	9 (6.7%)	25 (8.8%)	**171 (60.6%)**	3 (1.1%)	2.06 (1.50)
In order to get another / better employment in future.	68 (23.9%)	**75 (26.3%)**	45 (15.8%)	25 (8.8%)	69 (24.2%)	3 (1.1%)	3.17 (1.51)
For mainly academic interests	**92 (32.3%)**	79 (27.7%)	40 (14.0%)	33 (11.6%)	40 (14.0%)	1 (0.4%)	3.53 (1.41)
To pursue my personal interests (e.g. hobbies or my own tastes)	**124 (43.5%)**	98 (34.4%)	28 (9.8%)	15 (5.3%)	18 (6.3%)	2 (0.7%)	4.04 (1.15)
To learn or improve English	**126 (44.2%)**	100 (35.1%)	27 (9.5%)	13 (4.6%)	17 (6.0%)	2 (0.7%)	4.08 (1.12)
To know UK culture and people	80 (28.1%)	**83 (29.1%)**	50 (17.5%)	40 (14.0%)	30 (10.55)	2 (0.7%)	3.51 (1.32)
To change my life course to a new direction.	**93 (32.6%)**	76 (26.7%)	38 (13.3%)	33 (11.6%)	43 (15.1%)	2 (0.7%)	3.51 (1.44)
Because UK education is at a higher level and is beneficial for me.	29 (10.2%)	**72 (25.3%)**	63 (22.1%)	63 (22.1%)	55 (19.3%)	3 (1.1%)	2.85 (1.29)

3. Choice of HEI
(The highest % is shaded.)

Choice of HEI	5. Most applic-able	4. Fairly applic-able	3. Neither yes nor no	2. Not so applic-able	1. Not at all ap-plicable	N/A	Mean (S.D.)
This was the HEI of my first choice.	**149 (52.3%)**	69 (24.2%)	37 (13.0%)	14 (4.9%)	15 (5.3%)	1 (0.4)	4.14 (1.15)
I knew friends and / or teachers at this HEI before coming here.	50 (17.5%)	39 (13.7%)	13 (4.6%)	14 (4.9%)	**167 (58.6%)**	2 (0.7)	2.26 (1.65)
There was someone / some people who opposed to my decision.	16 (5.6%)	29 (10.2%)	20 (7.0%)	41 (14.4%)	**177 (62.1%)**	2 (0.7)	1.82 (1.26)
I had sufficient information about this HEI when deciding.	41 (14.4%)	**80 (28.1%)**	72 (25.3%)	59 (20.7%)	31 (10.9%)	2 (0.7)	3.14 (1.22)
It took me a long time to decide on this HEI.	34 (11.9%)	46 (16.1%)	43 (15.1%)	77 (27.0%)	**84 (29.5%)**	1 (0.4)	2.54 (1.37)

4. Course details.

(The highest % is shaded.)

Field of study	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities	Unidentified	N/A	285 (N/A =5)
	23 (8.1%)	100 (35.1%)	**134 (47.0%)**	23 (8.1%)	5 (1.8%)	
Course level	PhD / Ed.D	MA.or M.Sc	B.A. or B.Sc	Diploma or Certificate	JYA / Foun-dation	285 (N/A =5)
	61 (21.4%)	**83 (29.1%)**	73 (25.6%)	20 (7.0%)	43 (15.1%)	
Study period	1 year or less	1.5~3 years	3.5~5 years	5.5~7 years	8 years or more	N/A	285
	102 (35.8%)	75 (26.3%)	75 (26.3%)	17 (6%)	10 (3.5%)	6 (2.1%)	
Pre-sessional course(s)	Yes		No			285
	133 (46.7%)		**152 (53.3%)**			
Evaluation of pre-sessional course(s)	Very helpful	Fairly helpful.	Not sure.	Not very helpful.	Not helpful at all.	141 (multiple answers included)
	58 (41.13%)	50 (35.46%)	16 (11.35%)	13 (9.22%)	4 (2.84%)	

5. Accommodation

(The highest figure is shaded.)

Types of Accommodation	Hall of residence	Flat	Home stay	House sharing	Other	
One or more	**181 (63.5%)**	106 (37.2%)	46 (16.1%)	77 (27.0%)	Own house (10=3.5%) Flat-share (4=1.4%)	
Single answer	**106 (37.9%)**	39 (13.7%)	3 (1.1%)	30 (10.5%)	Own house (10=3.5%) Flat share (3=1.1%)	Total 191 (67.0%)

Number of living places	Those who lived in 2 places.	Those who lived in 3 places	Those who lived in 4 places	Total 93 (32.6%) N/A=1
	58	26	9	

Satisfaction degree for accommodation	5=Very satisfied.	4=Fairly satisfied.	3=Not sure.	2=Slightly dissatisfied	1=Very dissatisfied.	Other / NA	
	69 (24.2%)	**147 (51.6%)**	23 (8%)	28 (9.8%)	10 (3.5%)	4/4 (total 8)	Mean 3.86

Reasons for satisfaction (frequency of key-words mentioned)	wide (21), near (25), quiet (21), clean (26), flat-mates (42), cheap (17), good facilities (42), safety (11), freedom (8), pleasant room (31)
Reasons for dissatisfaction (frequency of key-words mentioned)	expensive (30), noisy (34), unclean, eg.kitchen (29), facility (fridge (19) + shower (13), bath (4), small room (12), old (16), far(8), common use problems (11), owner (10), people(8), heating problem(8), meal problem (9)

6. Social / personal contacts

(The highest % is shaded.)

Friendship patterns	5. Most applic-able	4. Fairly applic-able	3. Neither yes nor no	2. Not so applic-able	1. Not at all applic-able	N/A	Mean (S.D.)
I often study with someone else.	3 (1.1%)	29 (10.2%)	27 (9.5%)	89 (31.2%)	**137 (48.1%)**	0	1.85 (1.03)
I am often with friends.	32 (11.2%)	67 (23.6%)	**93 (32.6%)**	75 (26.3%)	18 (6.3%)	0	3.07 (1.10)
I have many friends of various nationalities.	**85 (29.8%)**	117 (41.1%)	48 (16.8%)	29 (10.2%)	6 (2.1%)	0	3.86 (1.02)
I have many Japanese friends.	39 (3.7%)	**82 (28.8%)**	71 (24.9%)	63 (22.1%)	30 (10.5%)	0	3.13 (1.21)
I get help from many people in my student life in the UK.	**111 (38.9%)**	102 (35.8%)	51 (17.9%)	17 (6.0%)	3 (1.1%)	1 (0.4%)	4.06 (0.96)

Nationality of close friends (multiple answers)	124 (43.5%) = Japanese 90 (31.6%) = British 21 (7.4%) = Chinese 20 (7.0%) = Taiwanese 10 (3.5%) = German 9 (3.2%) = Italian, Hong-Kong, Thai 8 (2.8%) = Korean 6 (2.1%) = Polish, Mexican 5 (1.8%) = American, Canadian, Greek 4 (1.4%) = Malaysian 3 (1.1%) =French, Indonesian, New Zealander, Spaniard, Slovakian 2 (0.7%) = Irish, Indian, Dutch, Turkish, Swiss, Sri-Lankan, Portuguese 1(0.35%)= Angora, Austrian, Botswanan, Brazilian, Czek, Colombian, Cyprus, Danish, Ecuadorian, Finnish, Hungarian, Iranian-French, Kenyan, Nepalese, Nigerian, Norwegian, Omani, Peruvian, Rumanian, Russian, Scottish, Singaporean, South African, Zambian,

Number of countries mentioned	1 country name	2 country names	3 country names	4 country names	5 country names	6 country names	other	N/A	
Number of respondents	191	41	18	9	1	2	6	15	

The following table shows the nationalities of close friends identified by each respondents to the survey. The right hand column shows for each student, who gave a specific reply, the classification for up to 2 friends. These were denoted by either J (Japanese), or B (British), or O (Other nationalities). (N.B. N.I. means 'No Information supplied'.)

Overall, 39 % of respondents had close Japanese friends, 38 % close friends of other nationalities, and 23 % close British friends.

Students Code No.	Nationalities of Close friends	Group letter
1	Polish, Nigerian	O
2	German, Swiss, Hong Kong, Indonesian, Chinese, Malaysian	O
3	N.I.	
4	Japanese, French, British	J,O
5	British	B
6	Korean, Chinese	O
7	British	B
8	Spaniard	O
9	British, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Greek	B,J
10	British	B
12	British	B
13	British (half Phillip.)	B
14	Japanese, British	J,B
15	German, Spaniard	O
16	Finnish	O
17	Korean,	O
18	British	B
19	N.I.	
20	Japanese	J
21	Japanese	J
22	Japanese	J
23	Japanese	J
24	Japanese	J
25	Japanese	O
26	Korean	O
27	Korean	J
28	Japanese	J
29	Japanese	J
30	Japanese	J
31	Japanese, British	J,B
32	Japanese	J,
33	Japanese, Slovakian	J,O
34	Japanese	J
35	Japanese	J
36	Japanese	J
37	Japanese	J
38	British	B
39	Greek	O
40	British, Indonesian, Taiwanese, Italian	B,O
41	French, Thai	O
42	Mexican, Taiwanese	O
43	British	B
44	American	O
45	Japanese	J
46	Spaniard	O
47	German	O
48	British, Japanese, British Indian	B,J
49	Chinese	O
50	British	B
51	British	B
52	Japanese, Thai	J,O
53	N.I.	
54	British	B
55	N.I.	
56	British	B
57	Peruvian, Chinese, Jap	O,J
58	Japanese	J
59	Hong Kong	O
60	Japanese	J
61	Italian	O
62	British	B
63	British	B

64	Japanese	J
65	N.I.	
66	Japanese	J
67	British	B
68	Rumanian, Brazil, British	O,B
69	British	B
70	Polish	O
71	British	B
72	Japanese	J
73	Asian, South. European.	O
74	British	B
75	Japanese	J
76	British American, Danish, German, Canadian, Greek	B,O
77	N.I.	
78	Indian	O
79	New Zealander	O
80	Japanese	J
81	British	B
82	Japanese	J
83	Yugo, Spaniard, Korean	O
84	British	B
85	South African	O
86	Italian, Polish, British	O,B
87	Japanese, Hong Kong, British	J,O
88	Austrian, German	O
89	Japanese	J
90	Japanese	J
91	Japanese	J
92	Japanese	J
93	Chinese	O
94	Japanese, Czek.	J,O
95	Japanese, British	J,B
96	Korean,	O
97	British	B
98	Japanese, Turk (British, Portuguese)	J,O
99	N.I.	
100	Taiwanese, Dutch	O
101	Japanese	J
102	Italian	O
103	Canadian	O
104	British	B
105	Taiwanese	O
106	Japanese, British, Czek, Polish	J,B
107	Japanese	J
108	Japanese	J
109	Japanese	J
110	Japanese	J
111	Japanese	J
112	Japanese	J
113	Thai, Norwegian	O
114	Japanese	J
115	Taiwanese, British	O,B
116	British	B
117	N.I.	
118	N.I.	
119	British	B
120	Taiwanese	O
121	British (Welsh)	B
122	Taiwanese	O
123	Taiwanese	O
124	Japanese	J
125	Thai	O
126	Japanese, British, Hong Kong	J,B
127	Japanese, British	J,B
128	Japanese	J
129	Taiwanese, Japanese	O,J
130	Chinese	O
131	N.I.	
132	Taiwanese	O
133	N.I.	
134	Japanese, Chinese	J,O
135	Japanese	J
136	British	B
137	Japanese	J
138	Japanese, British	J,B
139	Japanese	J
140	Japanese	J
141	Thai	O
142	Malaysian, Hong Kong, Swiss	O
143	Chinese	O
144	Japanese	J
145	Japanese	J
146	Taiwanese, Chinese	O
147	Japanese	J

148	Canadian	O
149	British	B
150	Mexican	O
151	British, American	B,O
152	Mexican	O
153	Russian	O
154	N.I.	
155	Japanese, Taiwanese	J,O
156	Japanese	J
157	Japanese	J
158	Japanese	J
159	British, New Zealander, Japanese	B,O
160	Taiwanese	O
161	Japanese	J
162	British	B
163	Japanese, German French. Thai	J,O
164	Japanese	J
165	Japanese	J
166	Japanese	J
167	Japanese, Chinese	J,O
168	Italian	O
169	New Zealander, Zambian	O
170	British	B
171	Taiwanese	O
172	N.I.	
173	Japanese, Chinese	J,O
173	Nepalese	O
178	Chinese	O
179	Iranian-French, Italian	O
180	Japanese	J
181	British, Chinese	B,O
182	Japanese, Hong Kong, Taiwanese	J,O
183	Taiwanese	O
184	Japanese	J
185	N.I.	
186	Japanese	J
187	German, Italian	O
188	British	B
189	Chinese	O
190	Japanese	J
191	British, Irish	B,O
192	Malaysian	O
193	Taiwanese	O
194	Irish, British, Slovak	B,O
195	British	B
196	American, Japanese	O,J
197	Polish	O
198	Japanese	J
199	British	B
200	Japanese	J
201	British, German, Thai	B,O
202	British	B
203	Japanese, Hong Kong, Hungarian	J,O
204	Japanese	J
205	British, Polish, Hong Kong	B,O
206	Japanese	J
207	Japanese, British, Canadian	J,B
208	Japanese	J
209	Mexican	O
210	Japanese	J
211	British	B
212	Chinese, Ecuadorian	O
213	Japanese	J
214	Japanese	J
215	Chinese, Mexican	O
216	British	B
217	Cyprian, Italian, Singaporean, Jap	O,J
218	Greek	O
219	Japanese, Taiwanese, British	J,O
220	Japanese	J
221	Japanese	J
222	Chinese	O
223	Japanese, British,	J,B
224	British	B
225	Japanese	J
226	Japanese	J
227	Japanese	J
228	Japanese	J
229	British	B
230	Russian	O
231	Korean,	O
232	Japanese	J
233	Japanese, British	J,B
234	Japanese	J
235	Japanese	J

236	Japanese, British	J,B
237	British	B
238	Japanese, British	J,B
239	Thai, British	O,B
240	Greek	O
241	Japanese	J
242	Japanese	J
243	Japanese	J
244	British	B
245	Japanese, British	J,B
246	Japanese	J
247	Japanese	J
248	Japanese, British	J,B
249	Indonesian, Mexican	O
250	Chinese	O
251	Japanese, Chinese	J,O
252	British	B
253	British	B
254	Chinese	O
255	Turk	O
256	N.I.	
257	Columbian, Japanese, Omani, Angoran	O,J
258	Japanese	J
259	Sri Lankan, British, Japanese	O,B
260	Botswanan	O
261	Chinese	O
262	Spaniard	O
263	Scottish	B
264	American,	O
265	Japanese	J
266	Italian	O
267	Japanese	J
268	Thai	O
269	German	O
270	N.I.	
271	Kenyan	O
272	Jap	J
273	Sri Lankan	O
274	Dutch, German, British	O,B
275	Brit. Hong Kong, Malaysian	B,O
276	Taiwanese	O
277	Japanese	J
278	Japanese	J
279	Japanese, British	J,B
280	Japanese	J
281	Taiwanese	O
282	Canadian	O
283	Japanese	J
284	British	B
285	British	B

8. Contact with Japan

E-mails	Parcels	Letters	Tele-phone	< Contact with Japan >
61 (21.4)	0	0	8 (2.8)	1 = More than once a day (%)
75 (26.3)	2 (0.7)	3 (1.1)	32 (11.2)	2 = A few times a week (%)
86 (30.2)	5 (1.8)	22 (7.7)	**123 (43.2)**	3 = Once a week to a few times a month (%)
26 (9.1)	26 (9.1)	46 (16.1)	60 (21.1)	4 = About once a month (%)
10 (3.5)	87 (30.6)	**82 (28.8)**	32 (11.2)	5= Once in a few months. (%)
2 (0.7)	**97 (34.0)**	54 (19.0)	9 (3.1)	6 = About once in half a year (%)
1 (0.4)	22 (7.7)	19 (6.7)	7 (2.5)	7 = Less than once a year. (%)
8 (2.8)	20 (7.0)	36 (12.6)	5 (1.8)	8 = None (%)
16 (5.6)	26 (9.1)	23 (8.0)	9 (3.1)	N/A (%)

7. Person to consult when having problems

Problems in socio-cultural experience area	Problems in English language area	Problems in academic experience area	Person to consult when having problems.
54	3	12	1 My family
91	60	61	2 A Japanese friend
3	58	**97**	3 Teacher or personal / course tutor
34	**74**	24	4 An English friend
38	38	33	5 Fellow inter-national student
3	2	0	6 A counsellor
4	3	1	7 A landlady or landlord
1	1	1	8 Relative
17	16	17	9 Other
4	9	7	N/A

9. Self observation

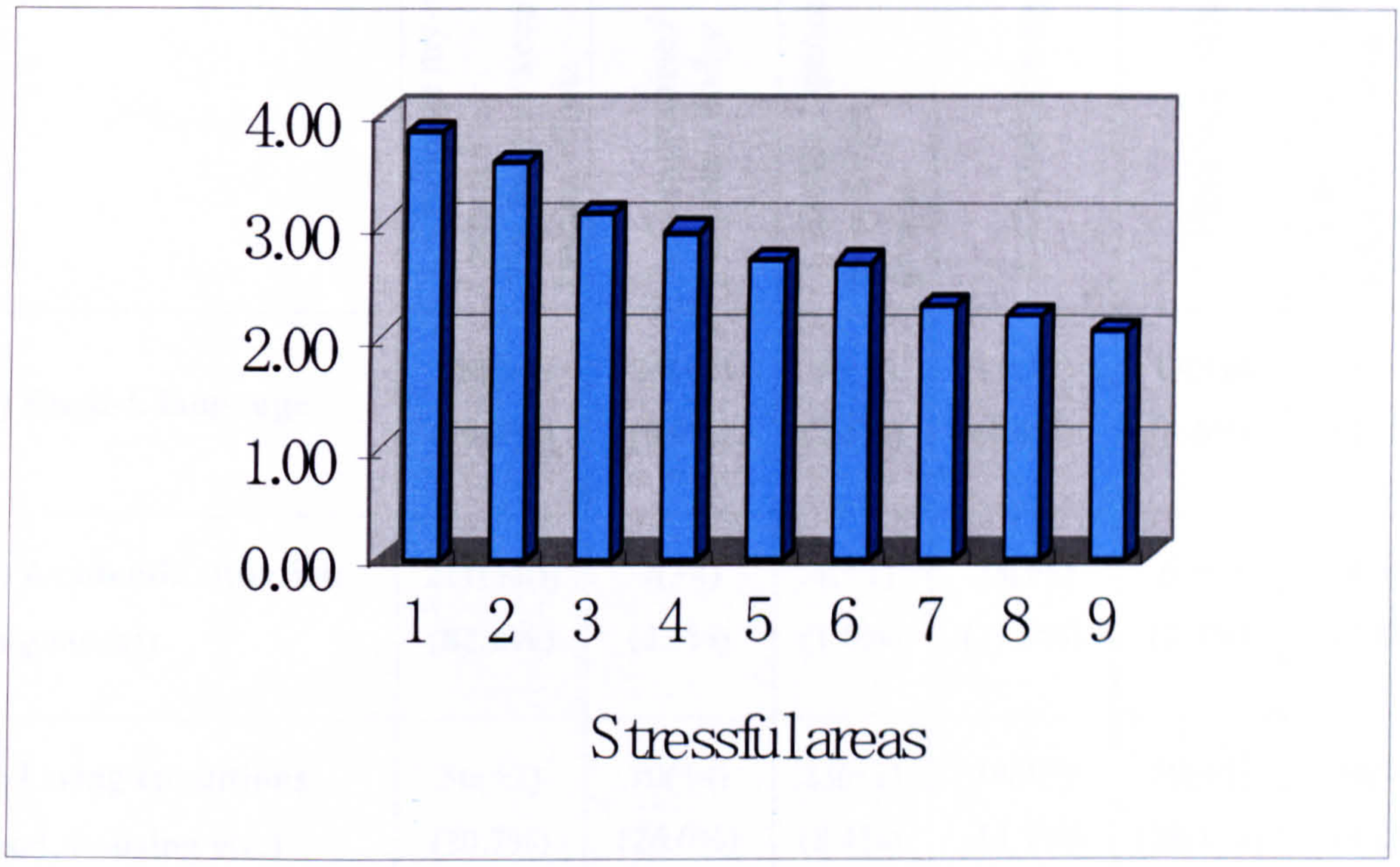
Self observation	5. Most applic-able	4. Fairly applic-able	3. Neither yes nor no	2. Not so applic-able	1. Not at all applic-able	Mean (S.D.)
(a) I am happy about my over-seas study experience in general.	**191 (67.0%)**	68 (23.9%)	22 (7.7%)	4 (1.4%)	0	4.56 (0.7)
(b) I feel quite nervous every day.	13 (4.6%)	52 (18.2%)	72 (25.3%)	**98 (34.4%)**	50 (17.5%)	2.58 (1.11)
(c) My overseas study experience is worthwhile.	**173 (60.7%)**	88 (30.9%)	17 (6.0%)	5 (1.8%)	2 (0.7%)	4.49 (0.75)
(d) My effort is not enough.	74 (26.0%)	**104 (36.5%)**	61 (21.4%)	38 (13.3%)	8 (2.8%)	3.69 (1.08)
(e) I am exhausted.	30 (10.5%)	67 (23.5%)	76 (26.7)	**83 (29.1%)**	29 (10.2%)	2.95 (1.17)
(f) I often become ill.	5 (1.8%)	14 (4.9%)	40 (14.0%)	81 (28.4%)	**145 (50.9%)**	1.78 (0.98)
(g) I feel very lonely.	10 (3.5%)	37 (13.0%)	70 (24.6%)	77 (27.0%)	**91 (31.9%)**	2.29 (1.15)
(h) I often feel frustrated.	24 (8.4%)	**96 (33.7%)**	58 (20.4%)	62 (21.8%)	44 (15.4%)	2.98 (1.23)
(i) I am anxious about my future.	44 (15.4%)	**89 (31.3%)**	63 (22.1%)	49 (17.2%)	40 (14.0%)	3.17 (1.28)

10. Degree of stress in 9 main areas of difficulty

9 areas of difficulties	5=Very difficult or stressful	4 = Fairly difficult or stressful	3 = Medium difficulty	2 = slightly stressful	1 = Very little stress	Mean (S.D.)
(a) English language	59 (20.7%)	125 (43.9%)	38 (13.3%)	45 (15.8%)	18 (6.3%)	3.57 (1.17)
(b) Academic situation(in general)	82 (28.8%)	122 (42.8%)	39 (13.7%)	35 (12.3%)	7 (2.5%)	3.83 (1.06)
(c) Living conditions (food, housing etc.)	9 (3.2%)	67 (23.6%)	61 (21.4%)	117 (41.1%)	31 (10.9%)	2.67 (1.05)
(d) Human relationships (teachers, classmates and others.)	14 (4.9%)	64 (22.5%)	60 (21.1%)	110 (38.6%)	37 (13.0%)	2.68 (1.11)
(e) Leisure and hobby activities	4 (1.4%)	25 (8.8%)	50 (17.5%)	110 (38.6%)	96 (33.7%)	2.06 (0.99)
(f) Culture, customs, and habits.	3 (1.1%)	0 (10.5%)	57 (20.0%)	120 (42.1%)	75 (26.3%)	2.18 (0.97)
(g) Financial conditions	44 (15.4%)	82 (28.8%)	53 (18.6%)	66 (23.2%)	40 (14.0%)	3.08 (1.30)
(h) Physical health conditions	5 (1.8%)	42 (14.7%)	54 (18.9%)	107 (37.5%)	77 (27.0%)	2.27 (1.07)
(i) Psychological conditions	24 (8.4%)	81 (28.4%)	66 (23.2%)	83 (29.1%)	31 (10.9%)	2.94 (1.16)

< Degree of stress in 9 main areas>

Order of stress by comparison of overall mean levels



Stressful areas

1. Academic situation (in general)(3.83)
2. English language(3.57)
3. Financial conditions(3.08)
4. Psychological conditions (stress factors) (2.94)
5. Human relationships (teachers, classmates and others.) (2.68)
6. Living conditions (food, housing etc.) (2.67)
7. Physical health conditions(2.27)
8. Culture, customs, and habits. (2.18)
9. Leisure and hobby activities (2.06)

11. Coping Strategies

N.B. The data includes multiple answers, shown by (+n). Total percentages are > 100%.

Coping Strategies	1. Challenge my-self / persist / Try harder / keep making efforts	2. Compromise / postpone / dodge	3. Escape / ignore / try to forget / give up	4. Consult someone	5. Have no problems	6. Take other coping action (eg. drink alcohol, go shopping, sleep)
(a) English language	**220(+6) (79.3%)**	21(+2) (8.0%)	8(+2) (3.5%)	11(+2) (4.6%)	13(+0) (4.6%)	5(+1) (2.1%)
(b) Academic situation (in general)	**221(+13) (82.1%)**	7(+4) (3.9%)	4(+1) (1.8%)	28(+6) (11.9%)	6(+1) (2.5%)	4(+4) (2.8%)
(c) Living conditions (food, housing etc.)	56(+3) (20.7%)	70(+4) (26.0%)	23(+1) (8.4%)	39(+3) (14.7%)	**79(+2) (28.4%)**	11(+1) (4.2%)
(d) Human relationships (teachers, classmates and others.)	38(+9) (16.5%)	35(+7) (14.7%)	36(+4) (14.0%)	**102(+7) (38.2%)**	48(+3) (17.9%)	9(+5) (4.9%)
(e) Leisure and hobby activities (N.I.=3)	34(+0) (11.9%)	30(+0) (10.5%)	16(+0) (5.6%)	15(+1) (5.6%)	**171(+0) (60%)**	12(+4) (5.6%)
(f) Culture, customs, and habits.	28(+0) (9.8%)	51(+1) (18.2%)	30(+1) (10.9)	38(+3) (14.4%)	**118(+3) (42.5%)**	12(+1) (4.6%)
(g) Financial conditions	**80(+4) (29.5%)**	25(+1) (9.1%)	10(+2) (4.2%)	64(+4) (23.9%)	80(+0) (28.1)	15(+3) (6.3%)
(h) Physical health conditions (N.I.=1)	46(+2) (16.8%)	9(+0) (3.2%)	6(+1) (2.5%)	73(+1) (26.0%)	**106(+0) (37.2%)**	33(+7) (14.0%)
(i) Psychological conditions	43(+7) (17.5%)	7(+3) (3.5%)	14(+2) (5.6%)	**115(+10) (43.9%)**	40(+0) (14.0%)	48(+8) (19.6%)

12. Advice to future Japanese students

N.B. The shadowed figure shows the highest result of each item.

Possible questions from future Japanese students.	5= Definitely yes	4= Rather yes	3= Unable to say	2= Rather no	1= Definitely no	N/A (%)	Mean (S.D.)
(a) Is it easier to study English in the UK than in Japan?	81 (28.4%)	**85 (29.8%)**	69 (24.2%)	33 (11.6%)	17 (6.0)	0	3.63 (1.18)
(b) I am not sure of my English ability. Is it all right if I go overseas for study?	69 (24.2%)	**80 (28.0%)**	64 (22.5%)	53 (18.6%)	19 (6.7%)	0	3.48 (1.23)
(c) Do you think it is worthwhile to go abroad to study, even if I have to borrow money?	34 (11.9%)	68 (23.9%)	**119 (41.8%)**	38 (13.3%)	26 (9.1%)	0	3.16 (1.09)
(d) Should I take a pre-sessional language course?	54 (18.9%)	**95 (33.3%)**	84 (29.5%)	27 (9.5%)	18 (6.3%)	7 (2.5)	3.50 (1.11)
(e) Should I speak out in the classroom, even if I make lots of mistakes?	**155 (54.4%)**	102 (35.8%)	21 (7.4%)	7 (2.5%)	0	0	4.42 (0.74)
(f) I am not confident in my ability. Can I follow the UK academic level?	22 (7.7%)	77 (27.0%)	**129 (45.3%)**	39 (13.7%)	16 (5.6%)	2 (0.7)	3.18 (0.96)
(g) Are teachers and friends supportive at your institution?	101 (35.4%)	72 (25.3%)	81 (28.4%)	19 (6.7%)	8 (2.8%)	4 (1.4)	3.92 (0.90)
(h) Should I call my teachers by their first names?	81 (28.4%)	**122 (42.8%)**	61 (21.4%)	20 (7.0%)	1 (0.4%)	0	3.85 (1.08)
(i) Is it possible to enjoy my overseas study life while having heavy work load?	100 (35.0%)	**102 (35.8%)**	60 (21.0)	19 (6.7%)	3 (1.1%)	1 (0.4)	3.98 (0.96)
(j) Should I restrict my contact with Japanese people during my overseas study period?	12 (4.2%)	24 (8.4%)	**93 (32.6%)**	86 (30.2%)	69 (24.2%)	1 (0.4)	2.38 (1.07)

13. Advice to UKHE Institutions

N.B. The shadowed figure shows the highest result of each item.

Possible questions from UKHE institutions	5= Definitely yes	4= Rather yes	3= Unable to say	2= Rather no	1= Definitely no	N/A. (%)	Mean (S.D.)
(k) Is our institution good enough to receive students from abroad?	25 (8.8%)	110 (38.6%)	69 (24.2%)	57 (20.0%)	19 (6.7%)	5 (1.8%)	3.23 (1.08)
(l) Should we provide more courses on training for academic skills?	46 (16.1%)	82 (28.8%)	93 (32.6%)	45 (15.8%)	9 (3.2%)	10 (3.5%)	3.40 (1.05)
(m) Do our English language pre-sessional courses work well?	15 (5.3%)	56 (19.6%)	121 (42.5%)	39 (13.7%)	18 (6.3%)	36 (12.6%)	3.04 (0.96)
(n) Should we improve our curriculum and courses for foreign students?	56 (19.6%)	85 (29.8%)	79 (27.7%)	24 (8.4%)	10 (3.5%)	31 (10.9%)	3.60 (1.05)
(o) Do you think we should reduce the foreign students' fees?	232 (81.4%)	28 (9.8%)	19 (6.7%)	1 (0.4%)	1 (0.4%)	4 (1.4%)	4.74 (0.63)
(p) Is the information service inside our institution good enough?	19 (6.7%)	65 (22.8%)	66 (23.2%)	86 (30.2%)	42 (14.7%)	7 (2.5%)	2.76 (1.17)
(q) Does our foreign students' advisory office provide good service?	13 (4.6%)	80 (28.1%)	101 (35.4%)	50 (17.5%)	31 (10.9%)	10 (3.5%)	2.98 (1.06)
(r) Are you content with your decision to come to this institution?	121 (42.5%)	116 (40.7%)	29 (10.2%)	7 (2.4%)	6 (2.1%)	6 (2.1%)	4.22 (0.89)
(s) Are you convinced with the result of your assessment and its methods?	46 (16.1%)	133 (46.7%)	70 (24.6%)	19 (6.7%)	6 (2.1%)	11 (3.9%)	3.71 (0.90)
(t) Can you recommend other Japanese students to come to this institution?	78 (27.4%)	102 (35.8%)	72 (25.3%)	18 (6.3%)	8 (2.8%)	7 (2.5%)	3.80 (1.01)

14. Self assessment of progress

Are there any ways in which you find yourself different after you started studying in the UK?

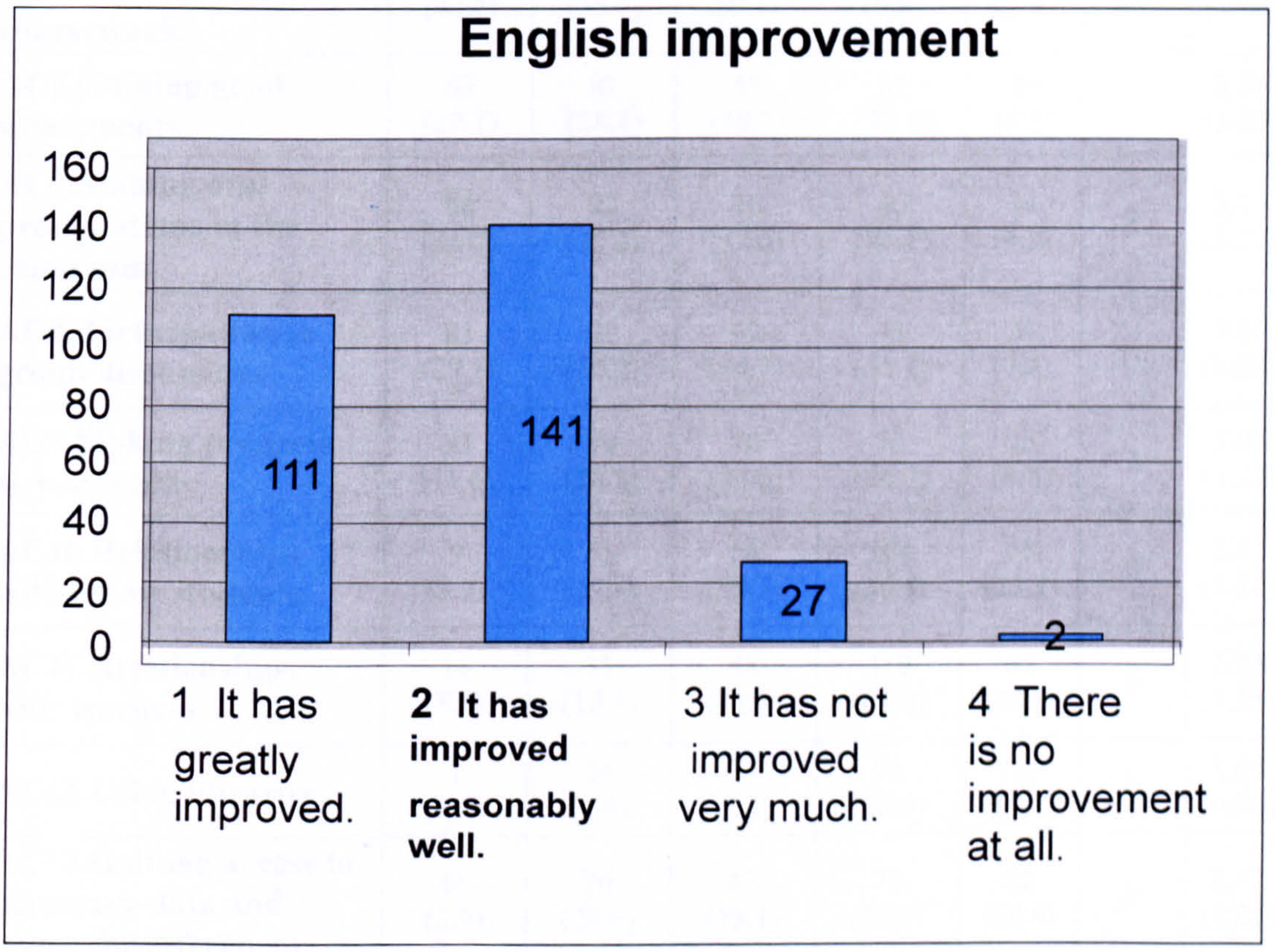
Difference and growth while studying in the UK?	5 Most applic-able	4 Fairly applic-able	3 Unable to say	2 Not so applic-able	1 Not at all applic-able	N/A	Mean (S.D.)
(a) I became more able to challenge difficulties.	79 (27.7%)	**108 (37.9%)**	73 (25.6%)	20 (7.0%)	4 (1.4%)	1 (0.4)	3.84 (0.96)
(b) My academic skill has improved and I gained a lot of new knowledge.	101 (35.4%)	**128 (44.9%)**	39 (13.7%)	16 (5.6%)	0	1 (0.4)	4.11 (0.84)
(c) I can make friends with people more easily now.	41 (14.4%)	101 (35.4%)	**104 (36.5%)**	34 (11.9%)	4 (1.4%)	1 (0.4%)	3.50 (0.93)
(d)With my English improvement I felt less stressful.	47 (16.5%)	92 (32.3%)	**94 (33.0%)**	43 (15.1%)	7 (2.5%)	2 (0.7)	3.46 (1.02)
(e) My cross-cultural adaptation ability has increased.	73 (25.6%)	**115 (40.4%)**	62 (21.8%)	28 (9.8%)	6 (2.1%)	1 (0.4%)	3.78 (1.01)
(f) My personality became more cheerful and outgoing.	22 (7.7%)	49 (17.2%)	**119 (41.8%)**	62 (21.8%)	32 (11.2%)	1 (0.4)	2.88 (1.07)
(g) I became more confident in my own ideas.	33 (11.6%)	79 (27.7%)	112 (39.3%)	45 (15.8%)	14 (4.9%)	2 (0.7)	3.25 (1.02)
(h) Awareness of my Japanese identity has been strengthened.	**97 (34.0%)**	83 (29.1%)	54 (18.9%)	31 (10.9%)	16 (5.6%)	5 (1.4)	3.76 (1.20)

15. Degree of satisfaction with study in the UK

Degree of satisfaction Of students	**5.** Greatest satis-faction	**4.** Some satis-faction	**3.** Unable to say	**2.** Not much satis-faction	**1.** No satis-faction at all	N/A (%)	Mean (S.D)
Number	102	**128**	46	5	2	2	4.15
(Percentage)	(35.8%)	**(44.9%)**	(16.1%)	(1.8%)	(0.7%)	(0.7)	(0.8)

16.Self-assessment of improvement in English language

The number of students for each of 4 choices of self-assessment is shown below.



17. Table of stress levels for 48 stress factors

Academic experiences	5. Extreme -ly stressful (%)	4. Fairly stressful (%)	3. Medium difficult y (%)	2. Slightly stressful (%)	1. Very little stress (%)	N/A (%)	Mean (S.D.)
AC1.Obtaining admission	49 (17.2)	75 (26.3)	32 (11.2)	70 (24.6)	59 (20.7)	0	2.95 (1.42)
AC2. Adjusting to new methods of teaching	19 (6.7)	86 (30.2)	41 (14.4)	**91 (31.9)**	48 (16.8)	0	2.78 (1.23)
AC3.Acquiring new study skills	24 (8.4)	**95 (33.3)**	47 (16.5)	85 (29.8)	34 (11.9)	0	2.97 (1.20)
AC4 Understanding course requirements	44 (15.4)	**94 (33.0)**	52 (18.2)	65 (22.8)	28 (9.8)	2 (0.7)	3.22 (1.24)
AC5. Dealing with examinations and coursework.	**126 (44.2)**	100 (35.0)	26 (9.1)	28 (9.8)	4 (1.4)	1 (0.35)	4.11 (1.02)
AC6.Gaining good assessments	63 (22.1)	**81 (28.4)**	55 (19.3)	65 (22.8)	20 (7.0)	1	3.36 (1.25)
AC7.Making oral presentations in the classroom	**96 (33.7)**	92 (32.3)	36 (12.6)	46 (16.1)	14 (4.9)	1	3.74 (1.22)
AC8.Participating in group discussions	83 (29.1)	95 (33.3)	42 (14.7)	43 (15.1)	21 (7.4)	1	3.62 (1.26)
AC9.Making progress in your study	33 (11.6)	**80 (28.1)**	70 (24.6)	76 (26.7)	25 (8.8)	1	3.07 (1.17)
AC10.Relationships with fellow students	9 (3.2)	51 (17.9)	55 (19.3)	**104 (36.5)**	66 (23.2)	0	2.41 (1.12)
AC11.Relationships with teachers	16 (5.6)	35 (12.3)	48 (16.8)	**119 (41.8)**	67 (23.5)	0	2.35 (1.13)
AC12.Using libraries	1 (0.4)	24 (8.4)	23 (8.1)	74 (26.0)	**163 (57.2)**	0	1.69 (0.96)
AC13.Gaining access to necessary data and books for references	11 (3.9)	70 (24.6)	43 (15.1)	79 (27.7)	**82 (28.8)**	0	2.47 (1.25)
AC14.Obtaining necessary information about course / class changes	10 3.5)	49 (17.2)	67 (23.5)	**91 (31.9)**	66 (23.2)	2 (0.7)	2.46 (1.13)
AC15.Paying the course fees	60 (21.1)	**86 (30.2)**	46 (16.1)	43 (15.1)	50 (17.5)	0	3.22 (1.40)
AC16. Getting support and understanding from family or friends in Japan.	8 (2.8)	31 (10.9)	23 (8.1)	71 (24.9)	**152 (53.3)**	0	1.85 (1.13)

English language experiences	5. Extreme-ly stressful (%)	4. Fairly stressful (%)	3. Medium difficulty (%)	2. Slightly stressful (%)	1. Very little stress (%)	N/A (%)	Mean (S.D.)
EL1. Writing English	46 (16.1)	**118 (41.4)**	41 (14.4)	51 (17.9)	29 (10.2)	0	3.35 (1.24)
EL2. Reading English	35 (12.3)	97 (34.0)	50 (17.5)	69 (24.2)	34 (11.9)	0	3.11 (1.25)
EL3. Speaking English in front of many people	92 (32.3)	**103 (36.1)**	31 (10.9)	41 (14.4)	18 (6.3)	0	3.74 (1.23)
EL4. Understanding lectures and taking notes	40 (14.0)	**71 (24.9)**	65 (22.8)	69 (24.2)	39 (13.7)	1	3.01 (1.27)
EL5. Understanding questions or opinions by other students during classes	39 (13.7)	**91 (31.9)**	57 (20.0)	61 (21.4)	37 (13.0)	0	3.12 (1.26)
EL6. Participating in group discussions by expressing questions or opinions	71 (24.9)	**95 (33.3)**	43 (15.1)	55 (19.3)	20 (7.0)	1	3.50 (1.25)
EL7. Daily conversations with friends and teachers	11 (3.9)	50 (17.5)	50 (17.5)	**91 (31.9)**	83 (29.1)	0	2.35 (1.18)
EL8. Reading newspapers and watching TV or movies	6 (2.1)	22 (7.7)	54 (18.9)	86 (30.2)	**117 (41.1)**	0	2.00 (1.05)
EL9. Talking on the telephone (in English)	34 (11.9)	**72 (25.3)**	49 (17.2)	69 (24.2)	61 (21.4)	0	2.82 (1.34)
EL10. Making complaint, arguing or claiming in English	48 (16.8)	**90 (31.6)**	54 (18.9)	44 (15.4)	49 (17.2)	0	3.15 (1.35)
EL11. Daily communication outside campus (e.g. shopping, or bus)	3 (1.1)	28 (9.8)	40 (14.0)	103 (36.1)	**111 (38.9)**	0	1.98 (1.01)
EL12. Quick speaking in English	22 (7.7)	**81 (28.4)**	56 (19.6)	70 (24.6)	56 (19.6)	0	2.80 (1.26)
EL13. Understanding varieties of English	25 (8.8)	**80 (28.1)**	56 (19.6)	73 (25.6)	51 (17.9)	0	2.84 (1.26)
EL14. Asking for proof-reading	21 (7.4)	47 (16.5)	**73 (25.6)**	**73 (25.6)**	66 (23.2)	5 1.75	2.59 (1.23)
EL15. Lack of opportunity of using Japanese (including books and PC)	13 (4.6)	33 (11.6)	60 (21.1)	80 (28.1)	**99 (34.7)**	0	2.23 (1.18)
EL16. Too much use of Japanese	22 (7.7)	48 (16.8)	62 (21.8)	58 (20.4)	88 (30.9)	7 (2.5)	2.49 (1.31)

Socio-cultural experiences	5. Extreme-ly stressful (%)	4. Fairly stressful (%)	3. Medium difficulty (%)	2. Slightly stressful (%)	1. Very little stress (%)	N/A (%)	Mean (S.D.)
SC1. Making friends	7 (2.5)	29 (10.2)	63 (22.1)	92 (32.3)	87 (30.5)	7 (2.5)	2.20 (1.07)
SC2. Finding good accommodation	39 (13.7)	73 (25.6)	52 (18.2)	63 (22.1)	50 (17.5)	8 (2.8)	2.96 (1.33)
SC3. Getting used to new / different food	18 (6.3)	31 (10.9)	39 (13.7)	82 (28.8)	108 (37.9)	7 (2.5)	2.17 (1.24)
SC4. Getting used to UK weather	28 (9.8)	55 (19.3)	43 (15.1)	88 (30.9)	64 (22.5)	7 (2.5)	2.62 (1.30)
SC5. Meeting new people other than Japanese	4 (1.4)	14 (4.9)	42 (14.7)	93 (32.6)	124 (43.5)	8 (2.8)	1.85 (0.95)
SC6. Feeling homesick (missing your friends and family)	24 (8.4)	50 (17.5)	47 (16.5)	91 (31.9)	66 (23.2)	7 (2.5)	2.55 (1.27)
SC7.Following procedures in a bank, police, hospital or offices. (Mark any.)	34 (11.9)	87 (30.5)	51 (17.9)	57 (20.0)	44 (15.4)	12 (4.2)	3.04 (1.30)
SC8. Dealing with financial procedures	57 (20.0)	69 (24.2)	59 (20.7)	47 (16.5)	46 (16.1)	7 (2.5)	3.16 (1.37)
SC9. Maintaining health	8 (2.8)	43 (15.1)	74 (26.0)	85 (29.8)	68 (23.9)	7 (2.5)	2.42 (1.10)
SC10. Different ideas of sanitary habits	30 (10.5)	65 (22.8)	63 (22.1)	56 (19.6)	63 (22.1)	8 (2.8)	2.79 (1.32)
SC11.Theft or damage to your belongings	21 (7.4)	71 (24.9)	74 (26.0)	56 (19.6)	52 (18.2)	11 (3.9)	2.83 (1.23)
S12. Anxiety for the future	59 (20.7)	79 (27.7)	54 (18.9)	52 (18.2)	34 (11.9)	7 (2.5)	3.28 (1.32)
SC13. Social isolation or loneliness	17 (6.0)	48 (16.8)	64 (22.5)	82 (28.8)	67 (23.5)	7 (2.5)	2.52 (1.20)
SC14. Racial discrimination	18 (6.3)	52 (18.2)	70 (24.6)	85 (29.8)	53 (18.6)	7 (2.5)	2.63 (1.17)
SC15. Gossiping among Japanese	16 (5.6)	31 (10.9)	53 (18.6)	70 (24.6)	107 (37.5)	8 (2.8)	2.20 (1.23)
SC16. Postal and other delivery services	23 (8.1)	44 (15.4)	50 (17.5)	70 (24.6)	91 (31.9)	7 (2.5)	2.42 (1.31)

18. The Mean Stress Levels of Profile Groups

Profile group	Sub-category	English stress	Life stress	Study stress	Total
Gender	Female	2.86	2.74	3.34	201
	Male	3.02	2.72	3.37	82
Family	Single	2.90	2.73	3.34	249
	Married, Co-live	2.96	2.75	3.50	19
	Married, not living together currently	2.88	2.80	3.44	14
Study field	Natural Science	2.62	2.59	3.03	38
	Social Science	2.82	2.61	3.34	99
	Humanities	3.00	2.83	3.43	120
	Undecided	3.25	3.02	3.49	23
Course level	PhD course	2.78	2.74	3.26	61
	Master course	3.03	2.62	3.54	83
	Bachelor course	2.69	2.77	3.17	73
	Diploma, Qualification	2.85	2.90	3.16	20
	Foundation, pre-sessional	3.26	2.81	3.55	43
Job history	Yes	2.90	2.70	3.31	166
	No job history	2.90	2.78	3.41	119
Educational history	Post-graduate	3.01	2.71	3.35	50
	University	3.05	2.78	3.47	145
	2yr college, Technical school	2.90	2.88	3.40	21
	Senior High, *Kentei (* exam)	2.57	2.55	3.12	58
	Primary and Junior school	2.15	2.99	2.88	10
English level	Level 1	2.59	2.39	3.21	38
	Level 2	2.89	2.79	3.37	59
	Level 3	2.87	2.84	3.35	86
	Level 4	2.93	2.64	3.30	68
	Level 5	3.45	3.06	3.70	24
Pre-sessional course	Not taken	2.81	2.66	3.23	152
	Yes	3.00	2.82	3.48	133
Past overseas study experience	None	3.10	2.77	3.51	114
	Yes	2.77	2.71	3.25	170
Age	Teens	1.88	3.18	2.58	2
	Twenties	2.88	2.71	3.31	168
	Thirties	2.92	2.82	3.37	90
	Forties	3.23	2.72	3.76	11
	Fifties	2.84	2.33	3.62	5
	Sixties	3.27	2.09	4.00	1

Appendix IV. The follow-up interview questions

I. Individual stress factors

(a) What was your most stressful event or factor during your overseas study period? Could you describe in as much detail as possible anything that can be related to your difficulty, trouble or problems?

(b) What was the most positive experience which helped you in your study in the UK?

II. Individual coping strategies

(a) How did you try to cope with your difficulties?

(b) Looking back could you have minimized the stress in any other way either in your preparation for UK study or when in the UK?

III. The degree of stress in relation to time factors using a stress / time graph.

(a) Could you draw a line (or graph) of your experience, highest at the time of happiness or satisfaction, lowest at the time of problems or difficulties and depression, between the start of your course and the end (or present).

(b) What were the incidents to symbolise those highest/ lowest moments?

IV. Evaluation / Comparison of problems

(a) Here are the results. Could you explain why you think there are certain differences between the average scores and your scores?

(b) If you had problems in academic or socio-cultural experiences how far do you think those problems were related to, or overlapping, your language problems?

V. Summary of the overall experience of studying in the UK.

(a) Looking back at your time spent in the UK in what ways did you feel you were succeeding?

(b) On the balance did you feel mainly inadequate or mainly adequate/competent during your stay in the UK?

VI. Advice to future students and UKHE institutions.

(a) Could you please give any advice you think would be most important to those who wish to study in the UK in the future?

(b) Please describe concretely any improvement you would recommend to the university/institution where you studied.

Appendix V. Stress/ time graphs from student interviews

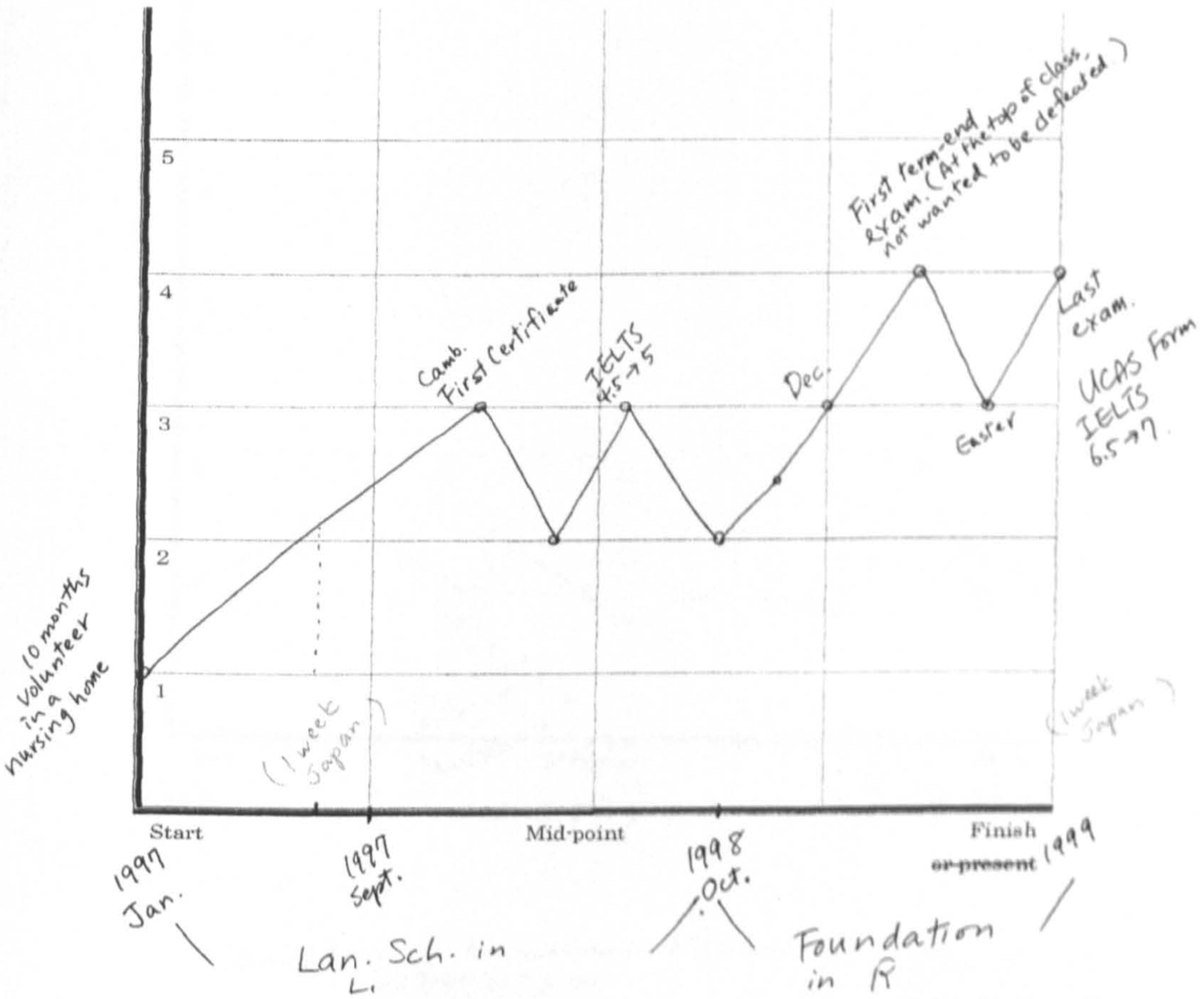
(1). Additional stress graphs for three students who were group representatives.

Group I. Maki 's stress graph (a). :

MK211 - 1

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph

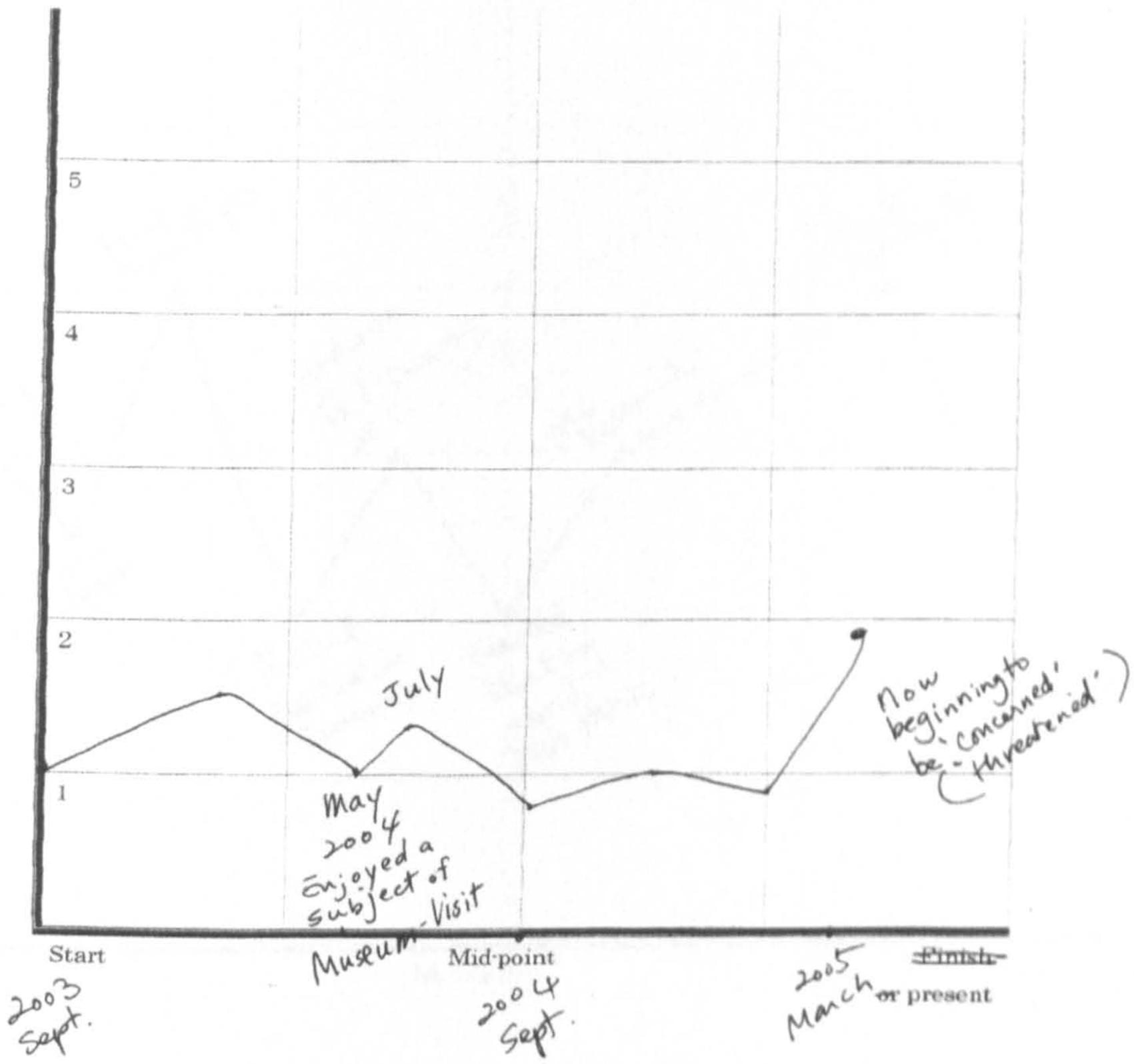


Group IV. Miwa's stress graph (b):

MM170 – 2

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



Second MA in Education in History.

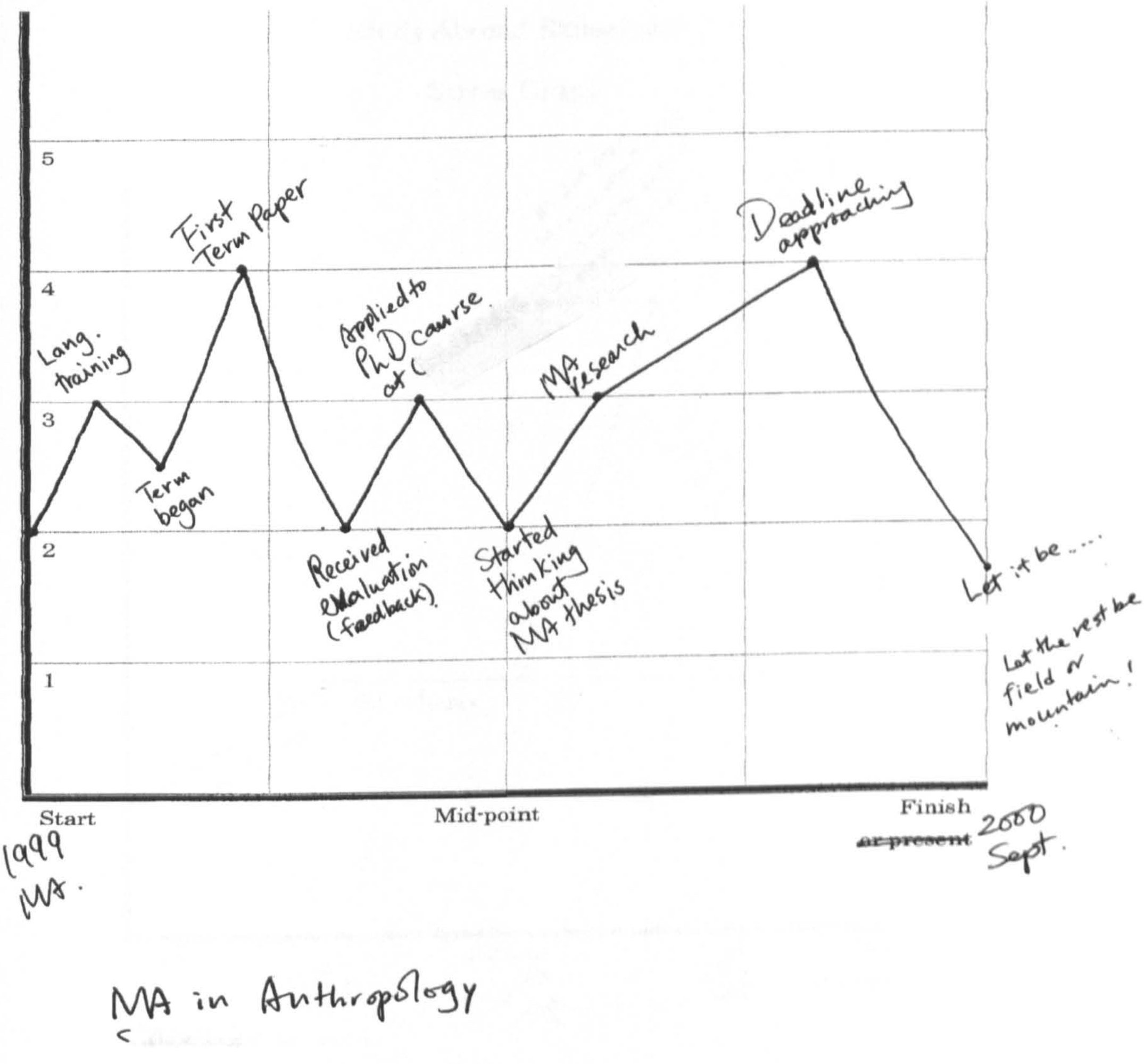
Group VII. Eiji's stress graph (a):

24

ET159–1

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



MA in Anthropology

(2) The stress graph of all 27 students who were interviewed.

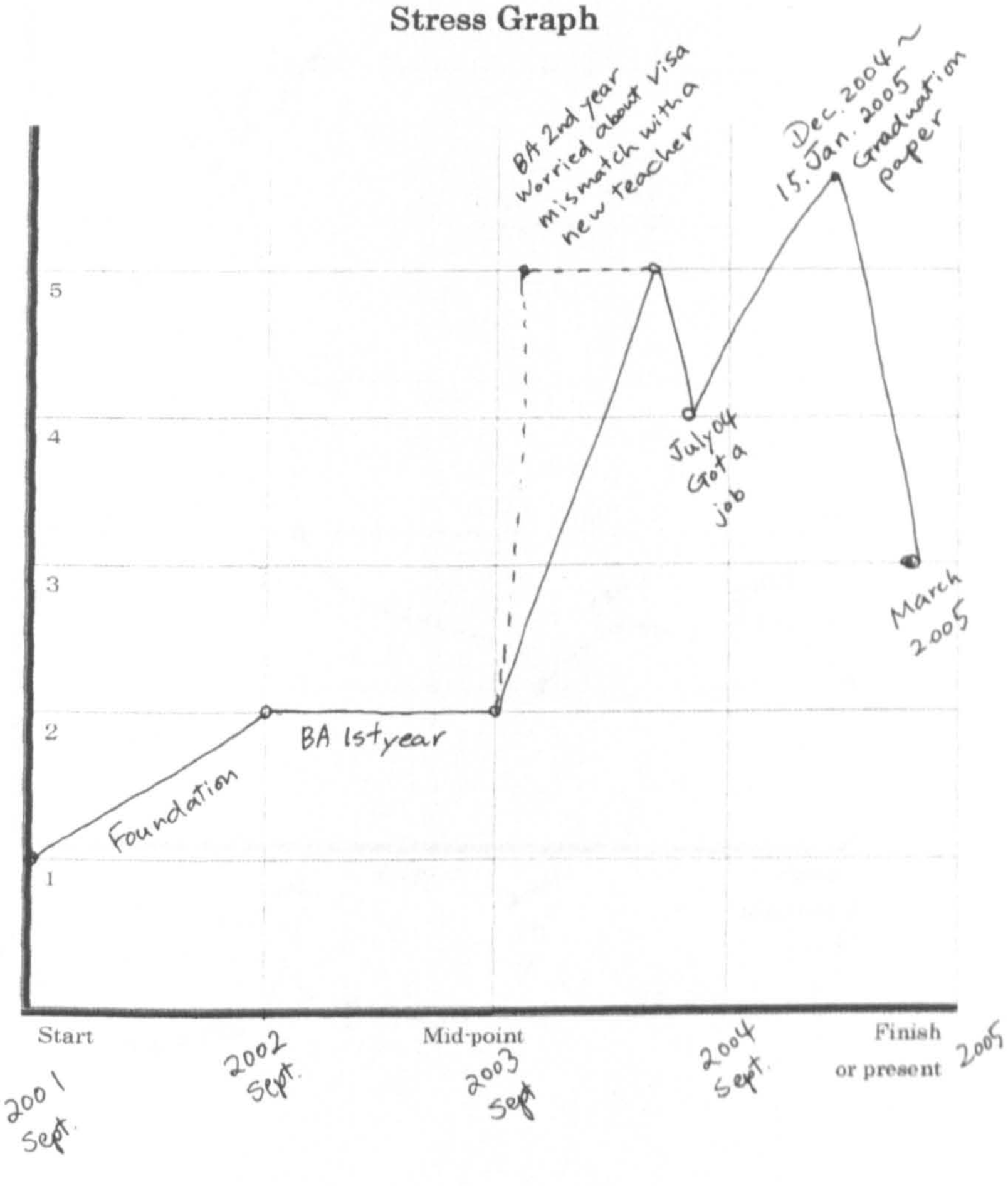
Group I (F+BA

Code No. 1 SA227

SA227

Study Abroad Experience

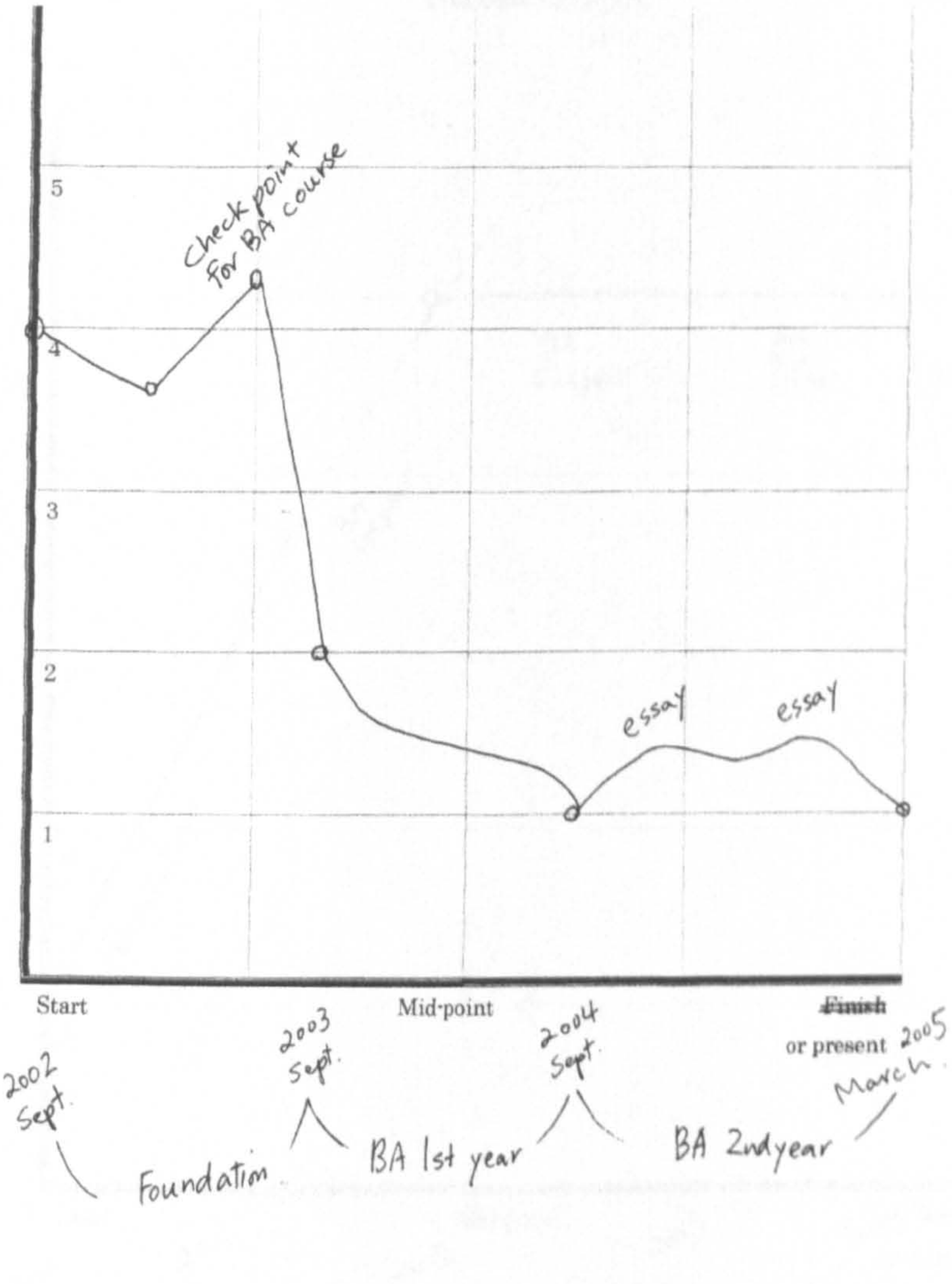
Stress Graph



Code No. 2 SSX6~

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph

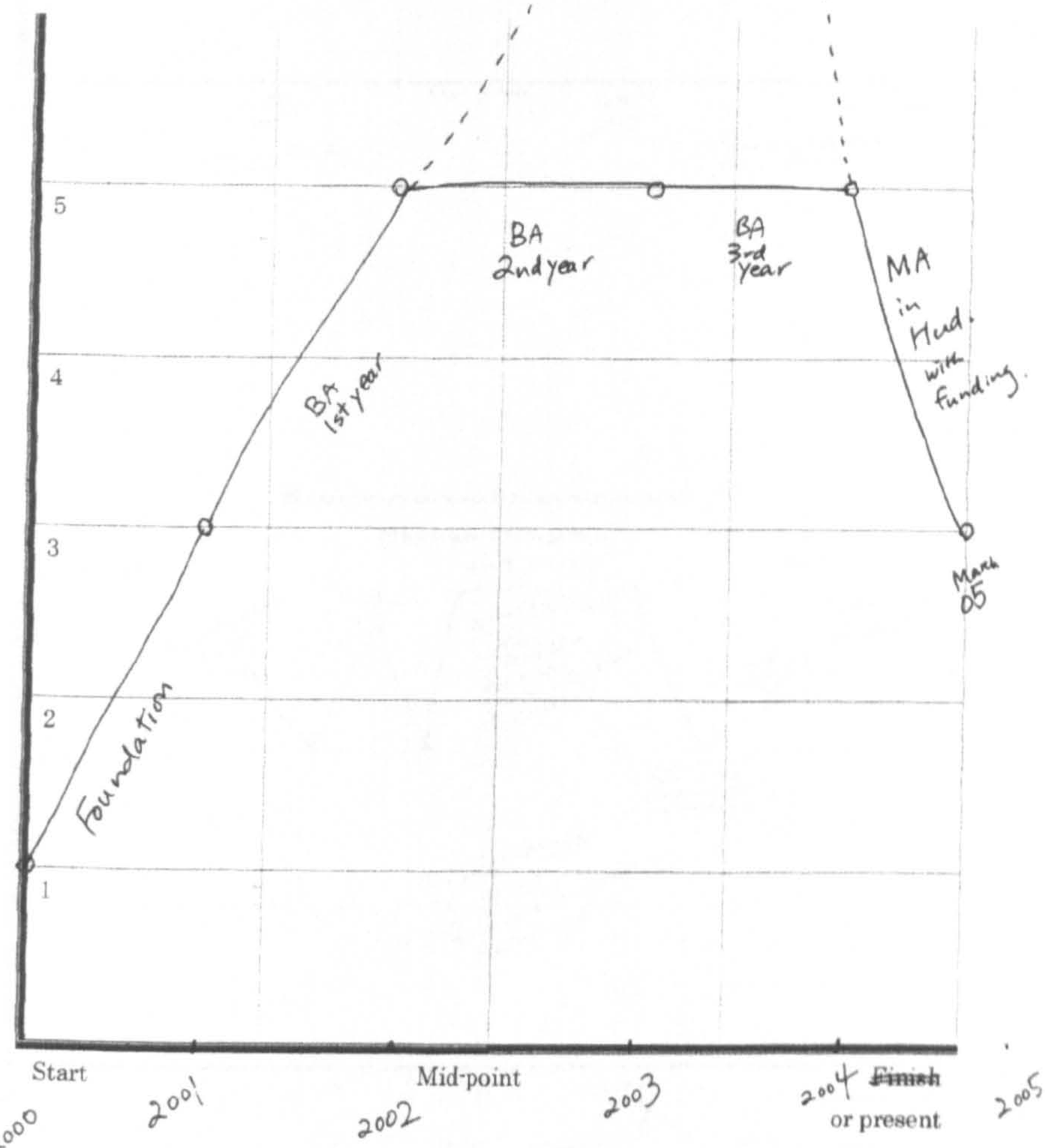


Code No. 3 TK228

TK228

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



Code No. 4 MK211

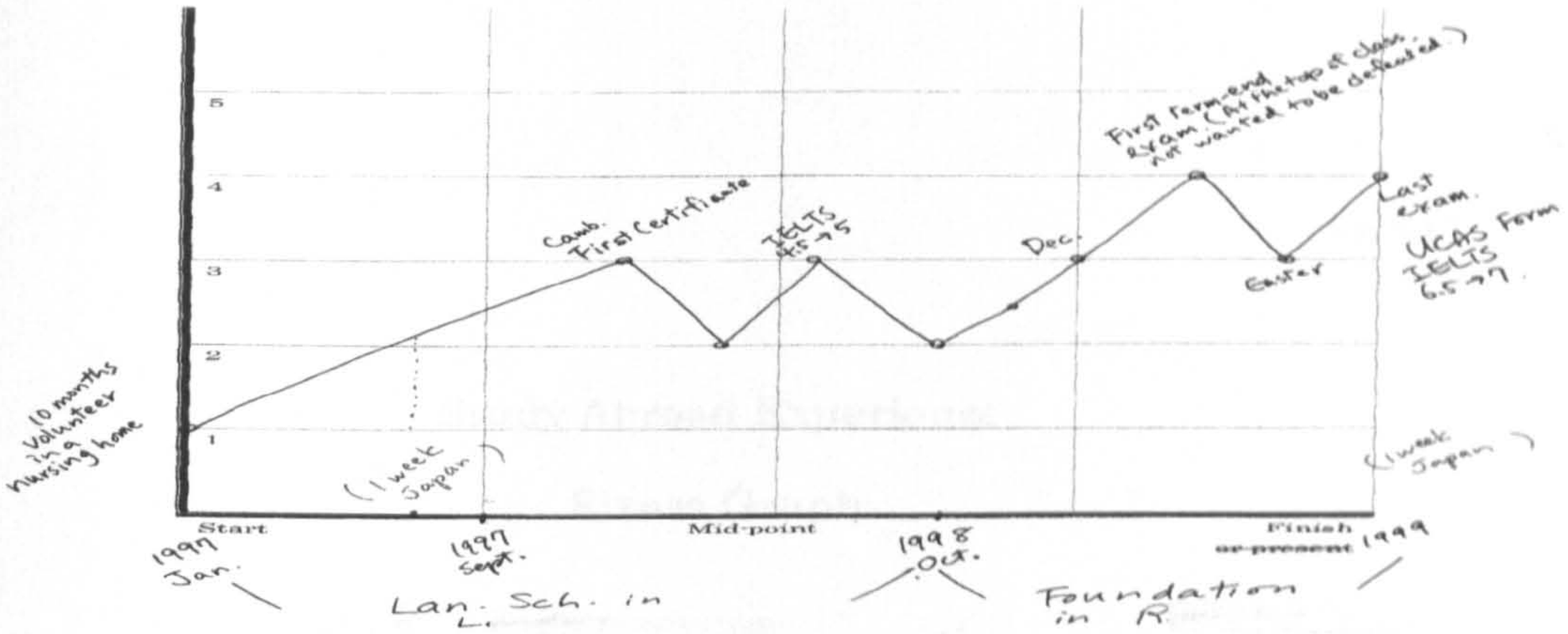
MK211

Code No. 4

MK211 – 1

Study Abroad Experience

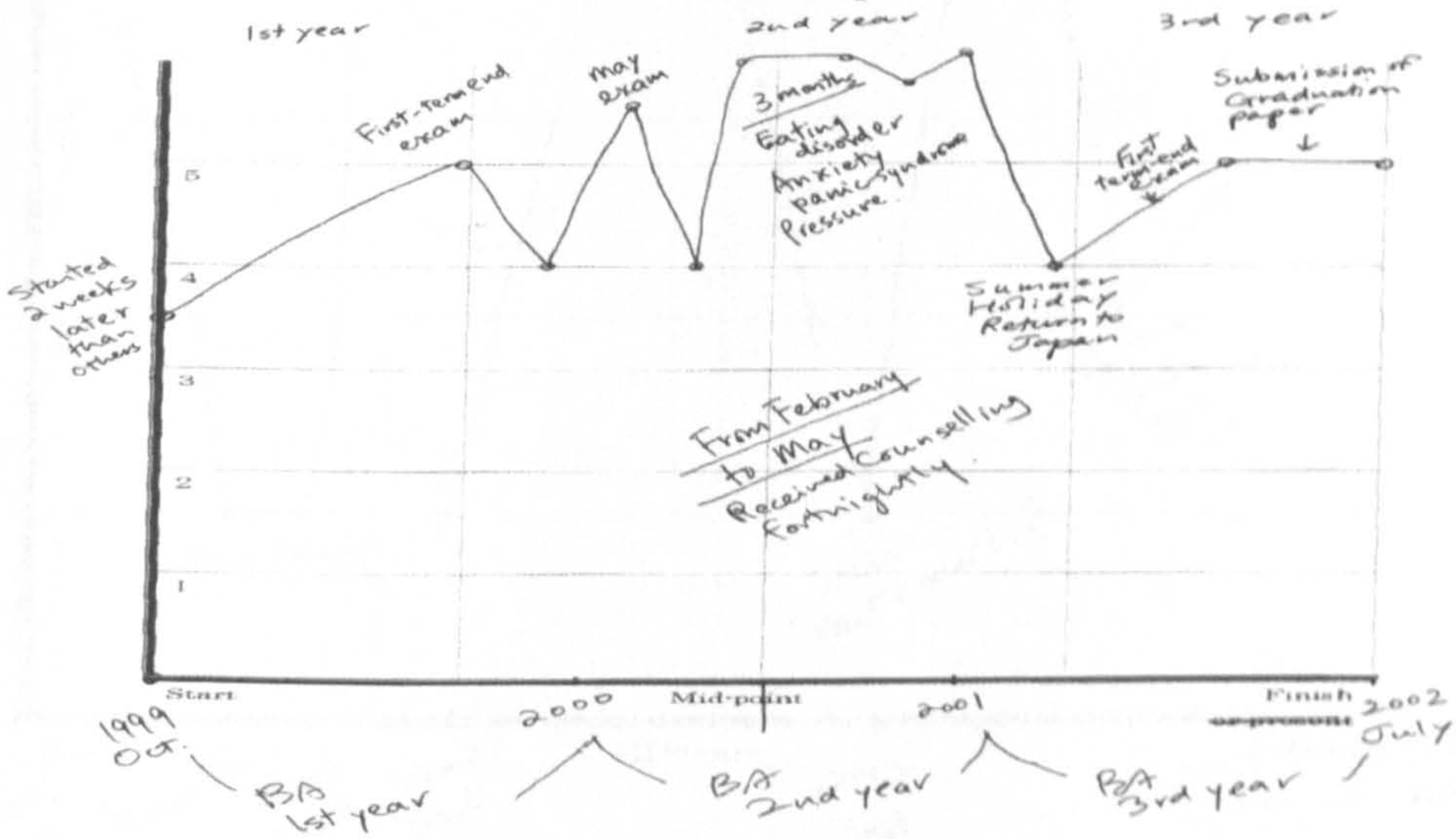
Stress Graph



MK211 — 2

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



Group II (F+BA~)

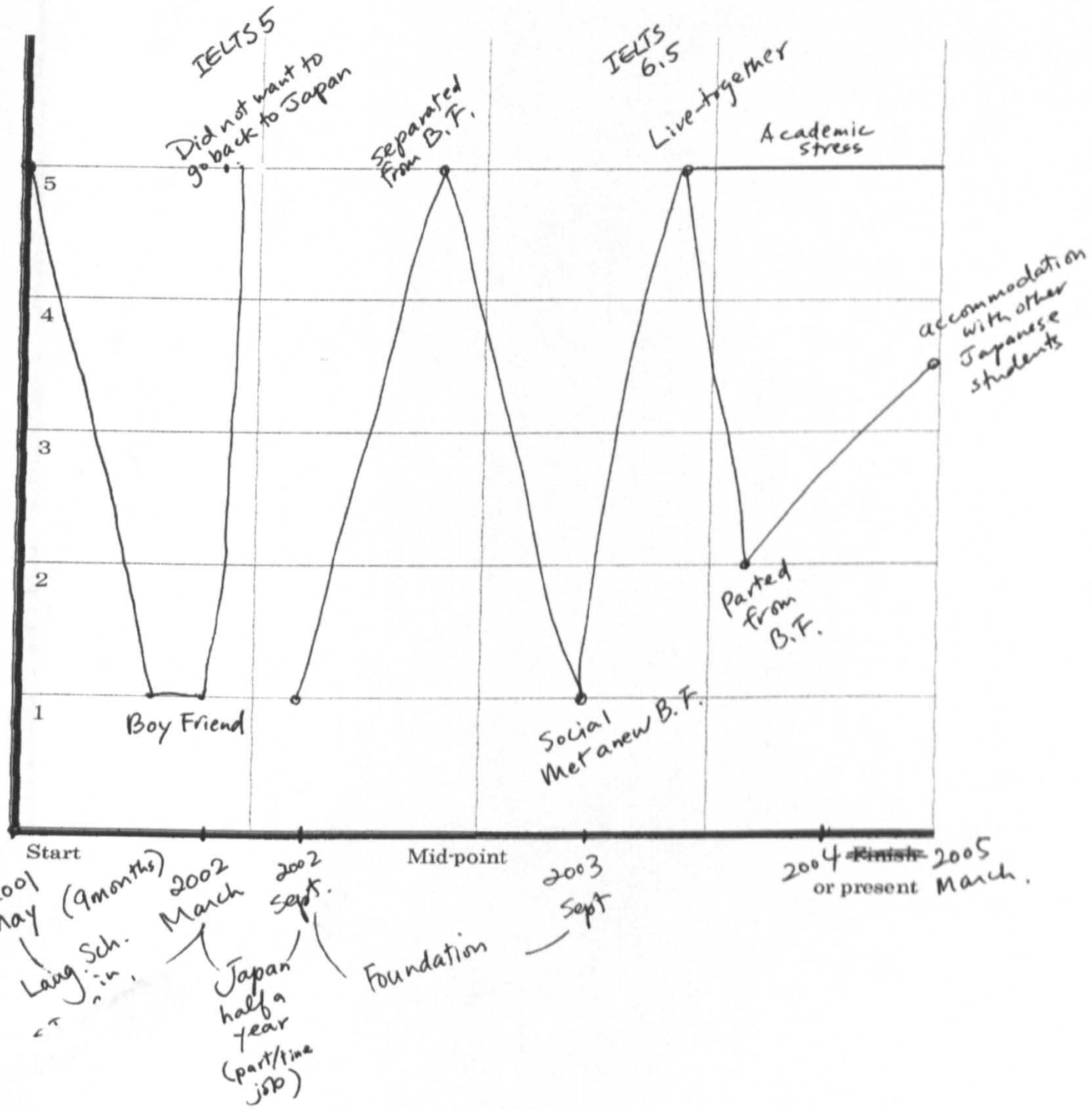
Code No. 5 EKX10~

15

EKX10

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph

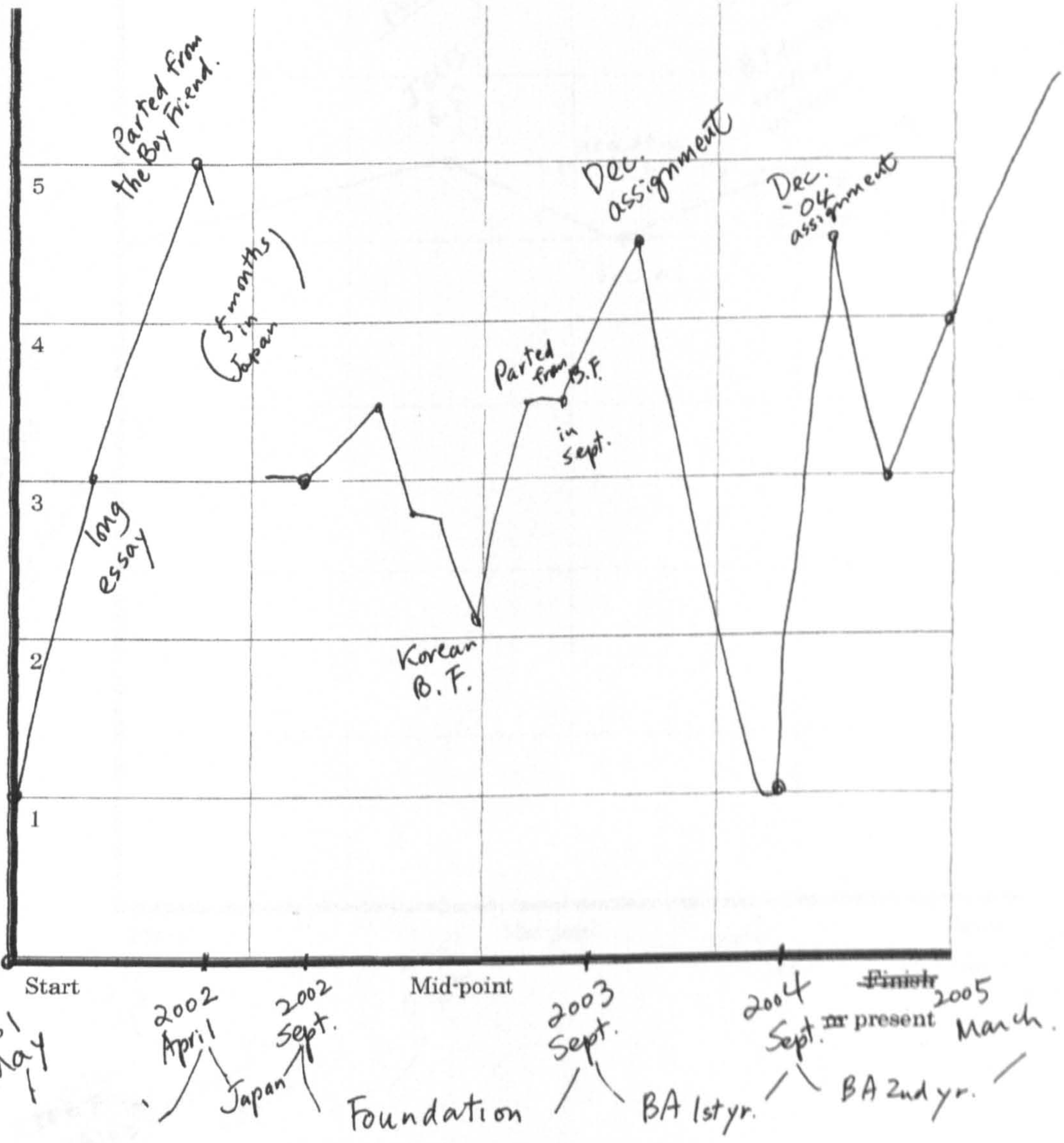


Code No. 6 EUX11~

EUX11

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph

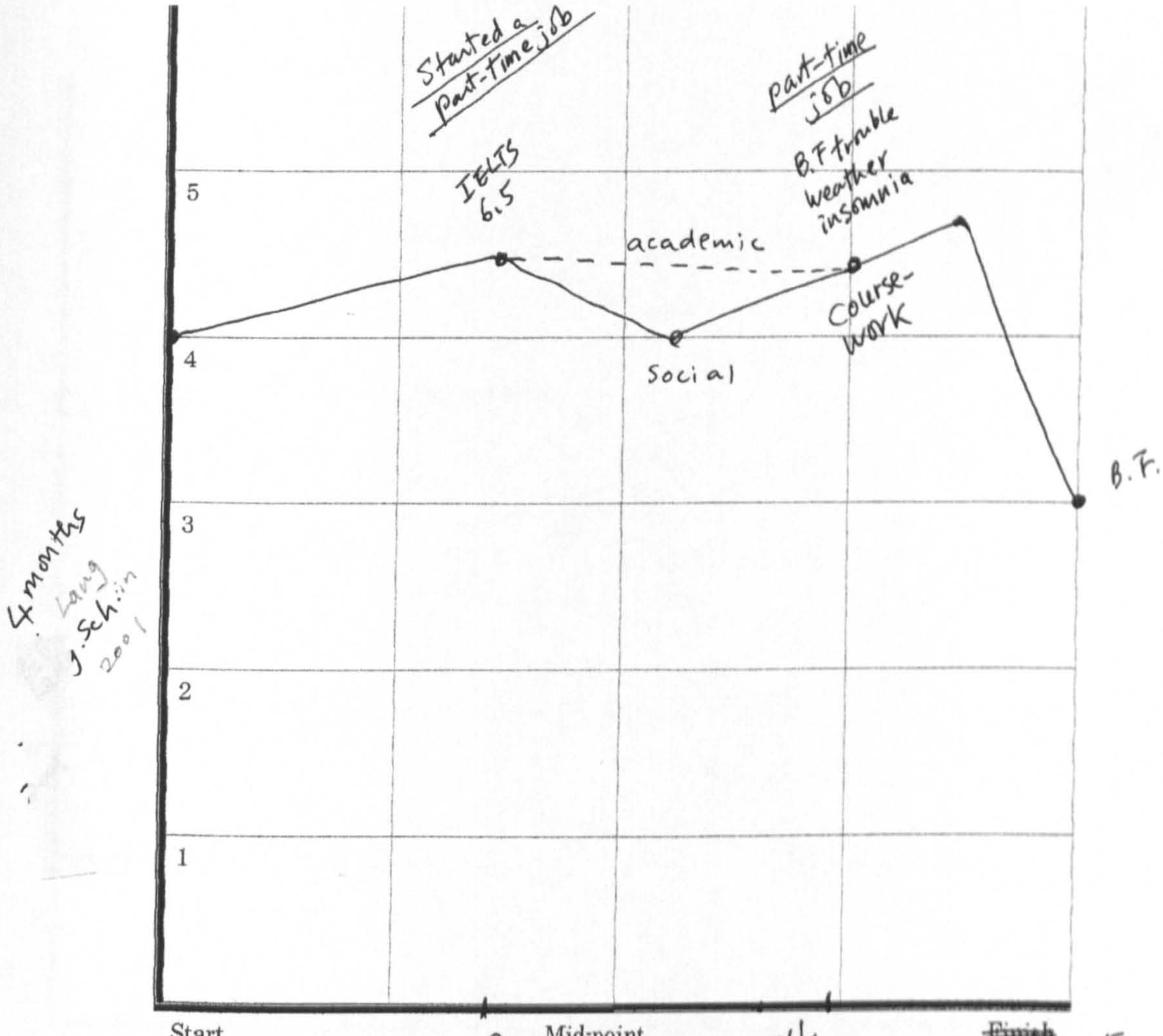


Code No. 7 KNX12~

KNX12-6a

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



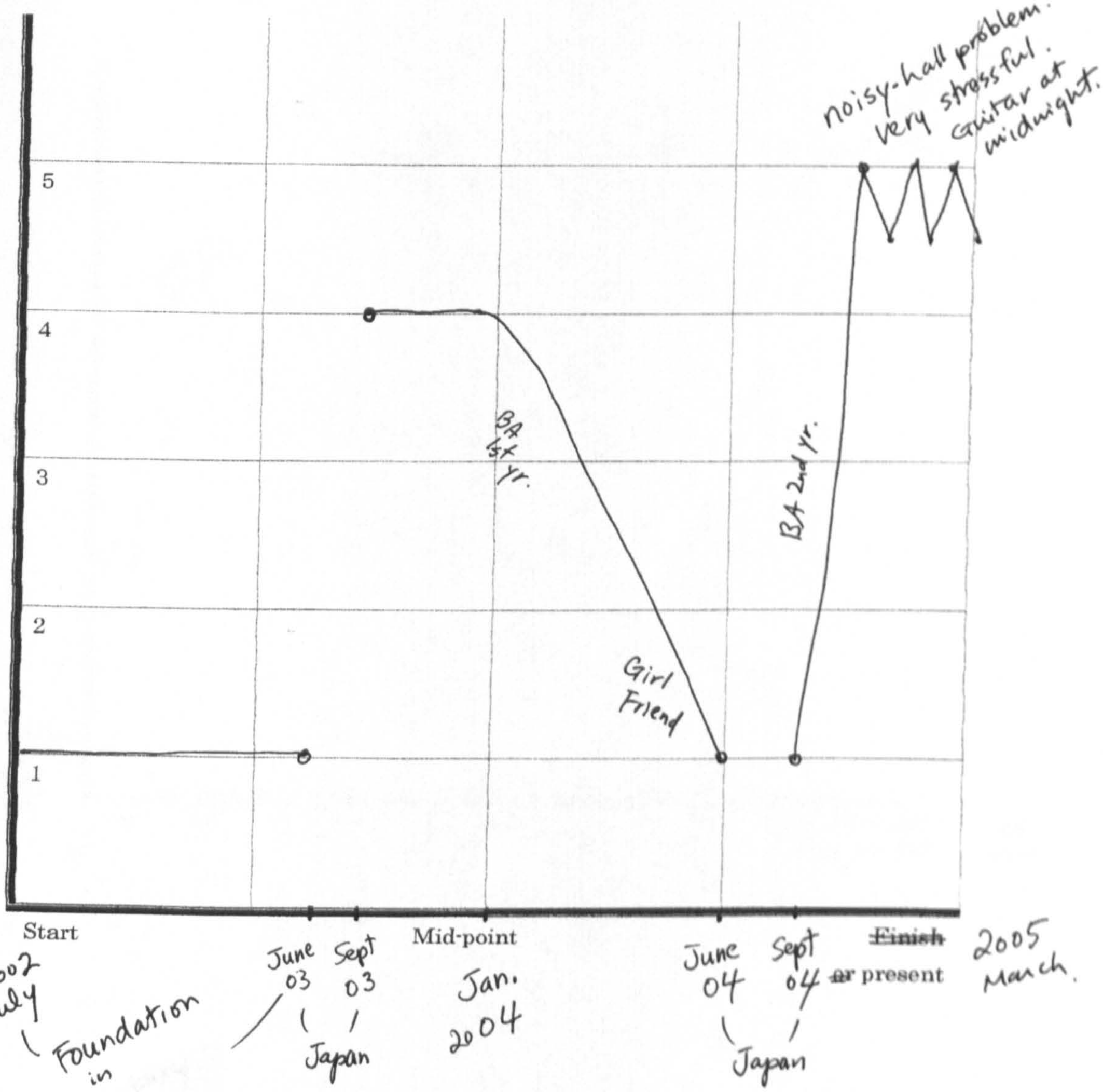
Code No. 8 MWX5~

8

MWX5

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



Group III. (G+A+B(+M)~)

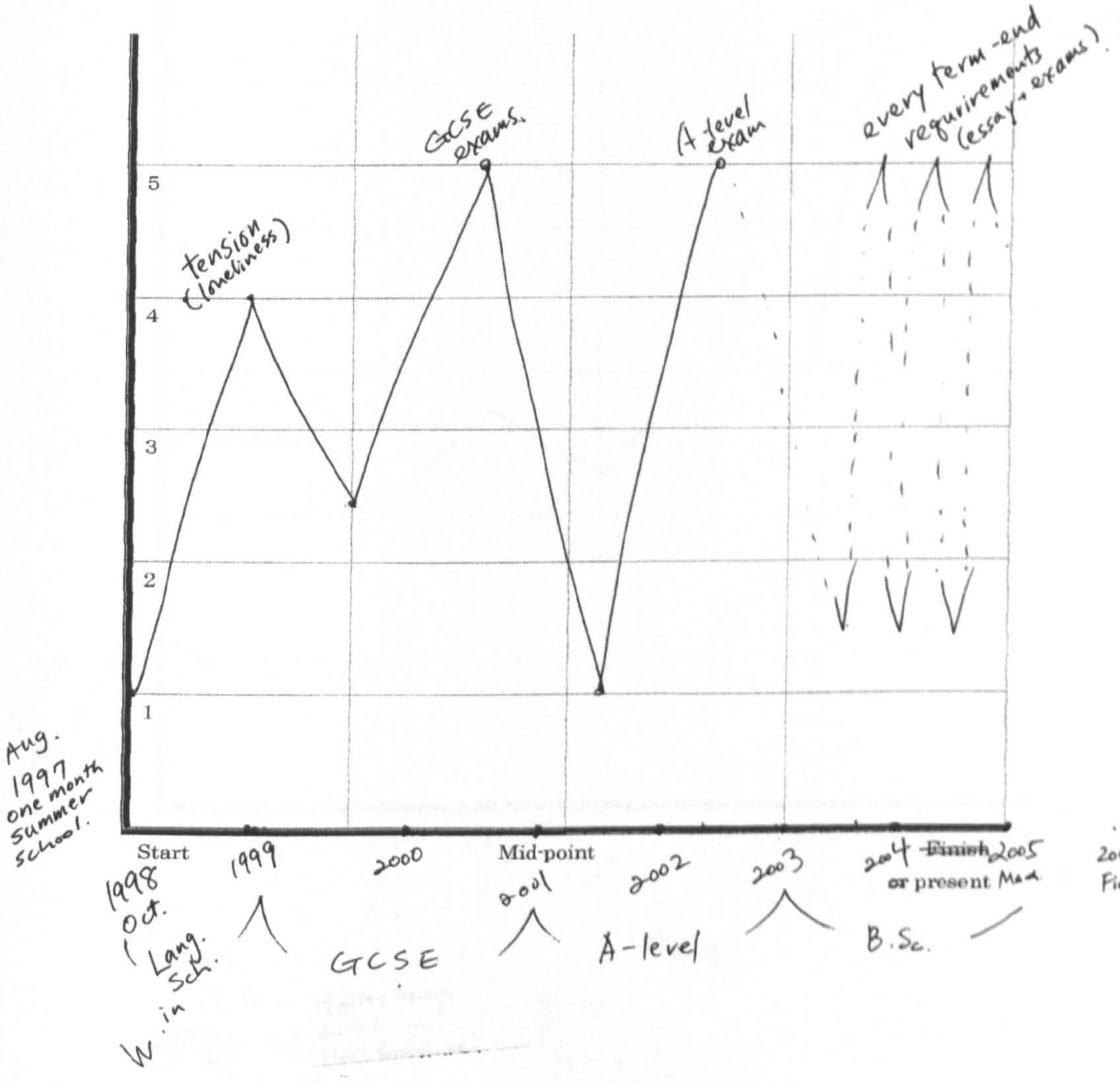
Code No. 9 JIX2~

9

JIX2

Study Abroad Experience

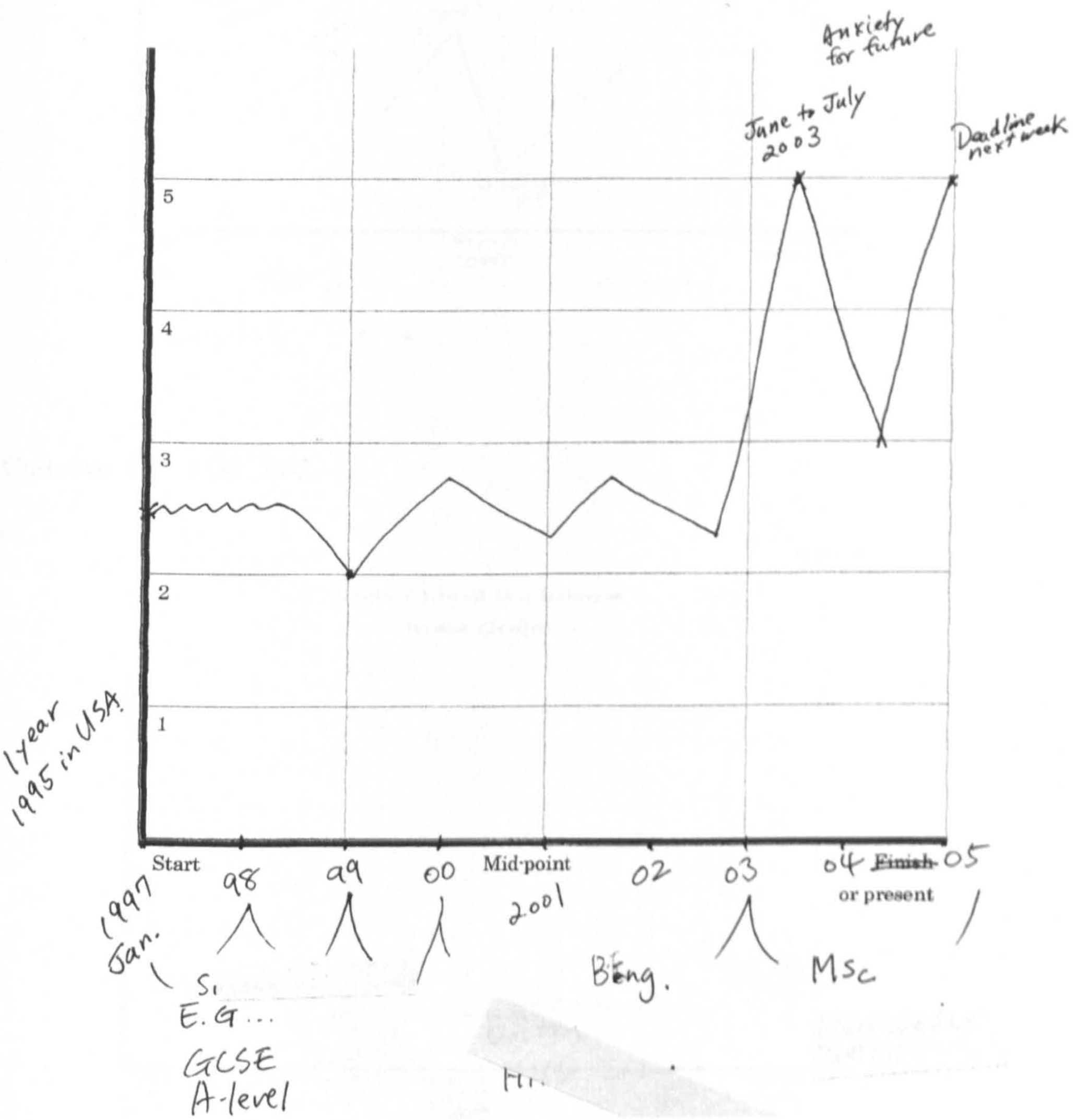
Stress Graph



Code No. 10 YYX3~

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



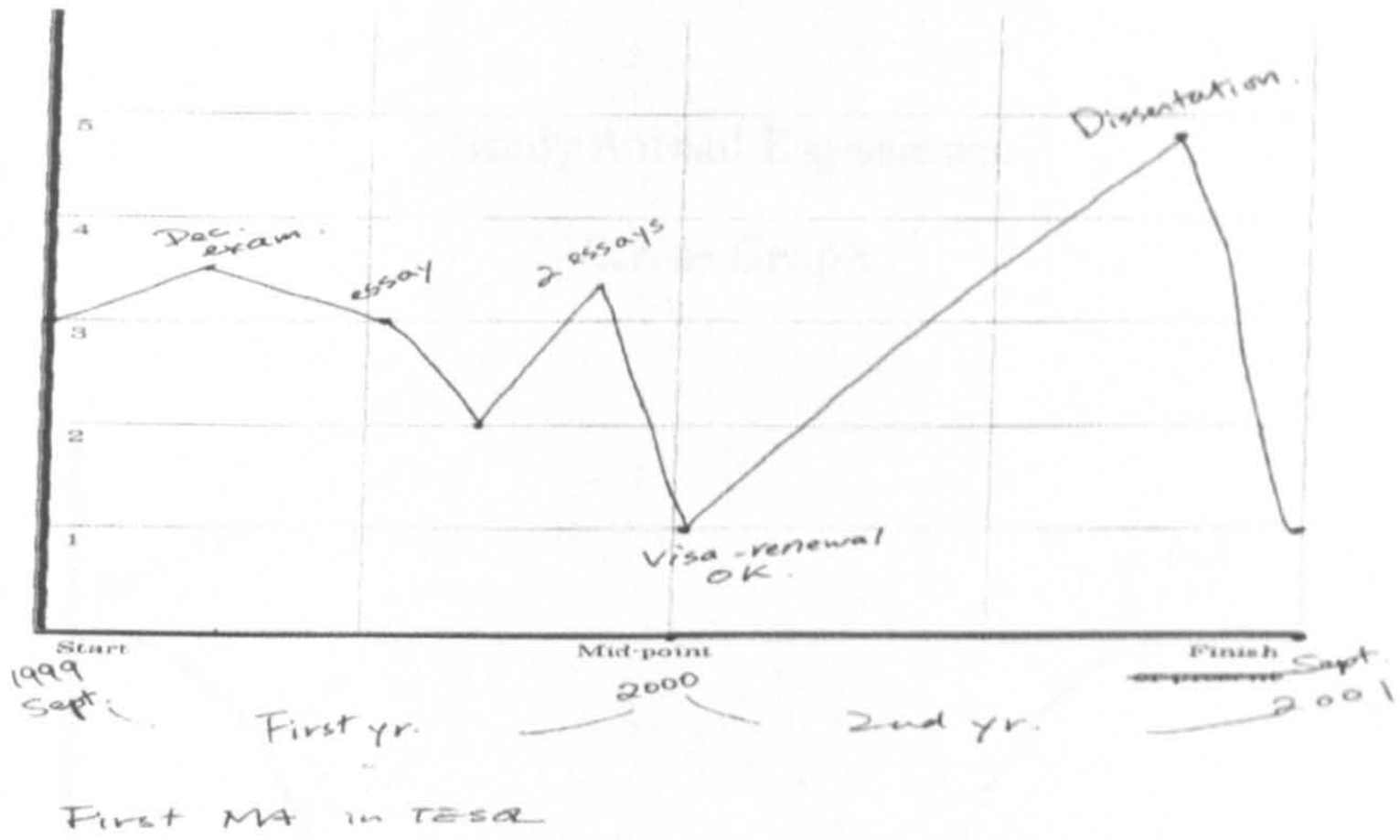
Group IV. (MA)

Code No. 11 MM170-1

MM170 — 1

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



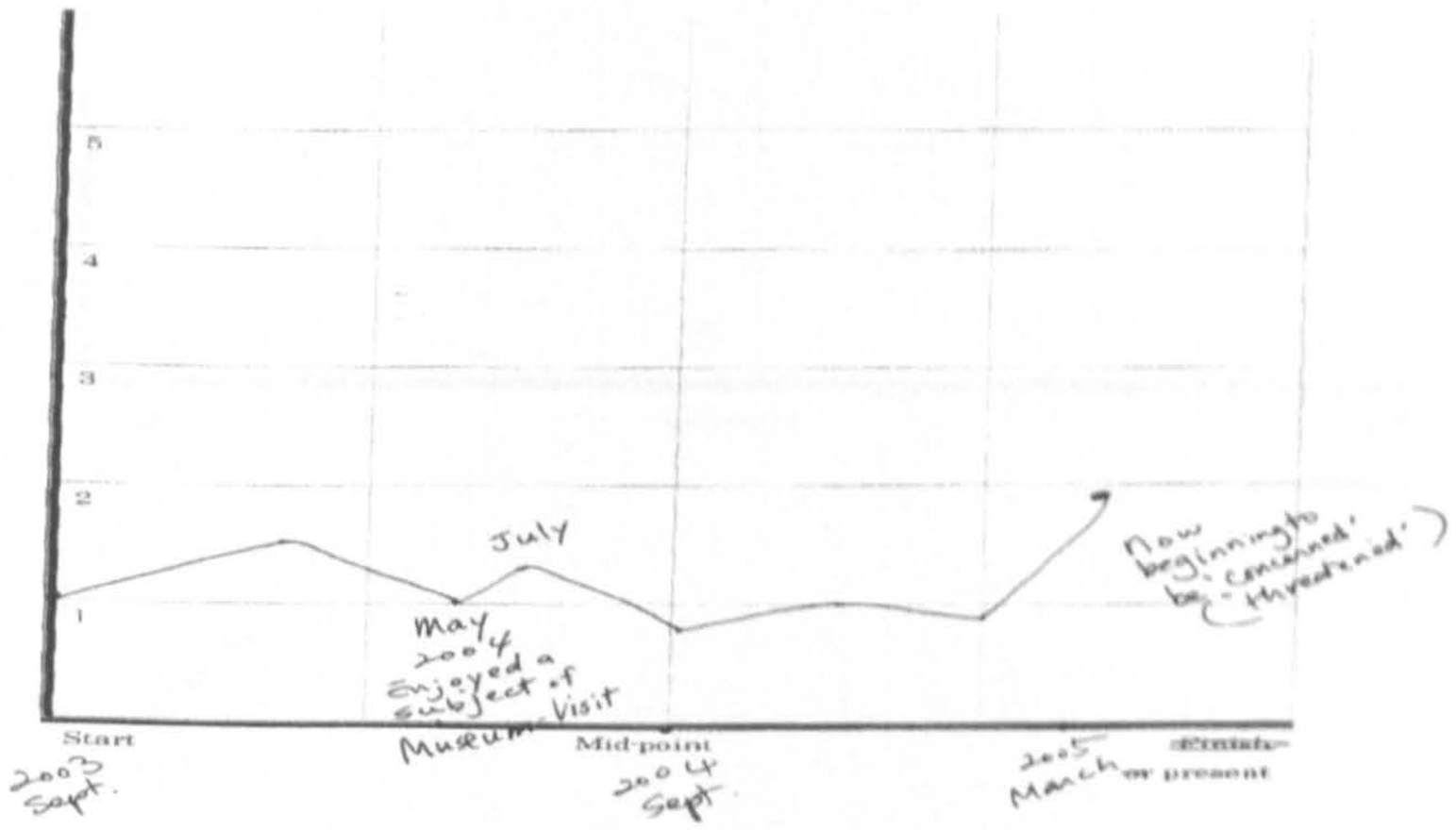
First MA in TESOL

Code No. 11 MM170-2~

MM170 — 2

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph

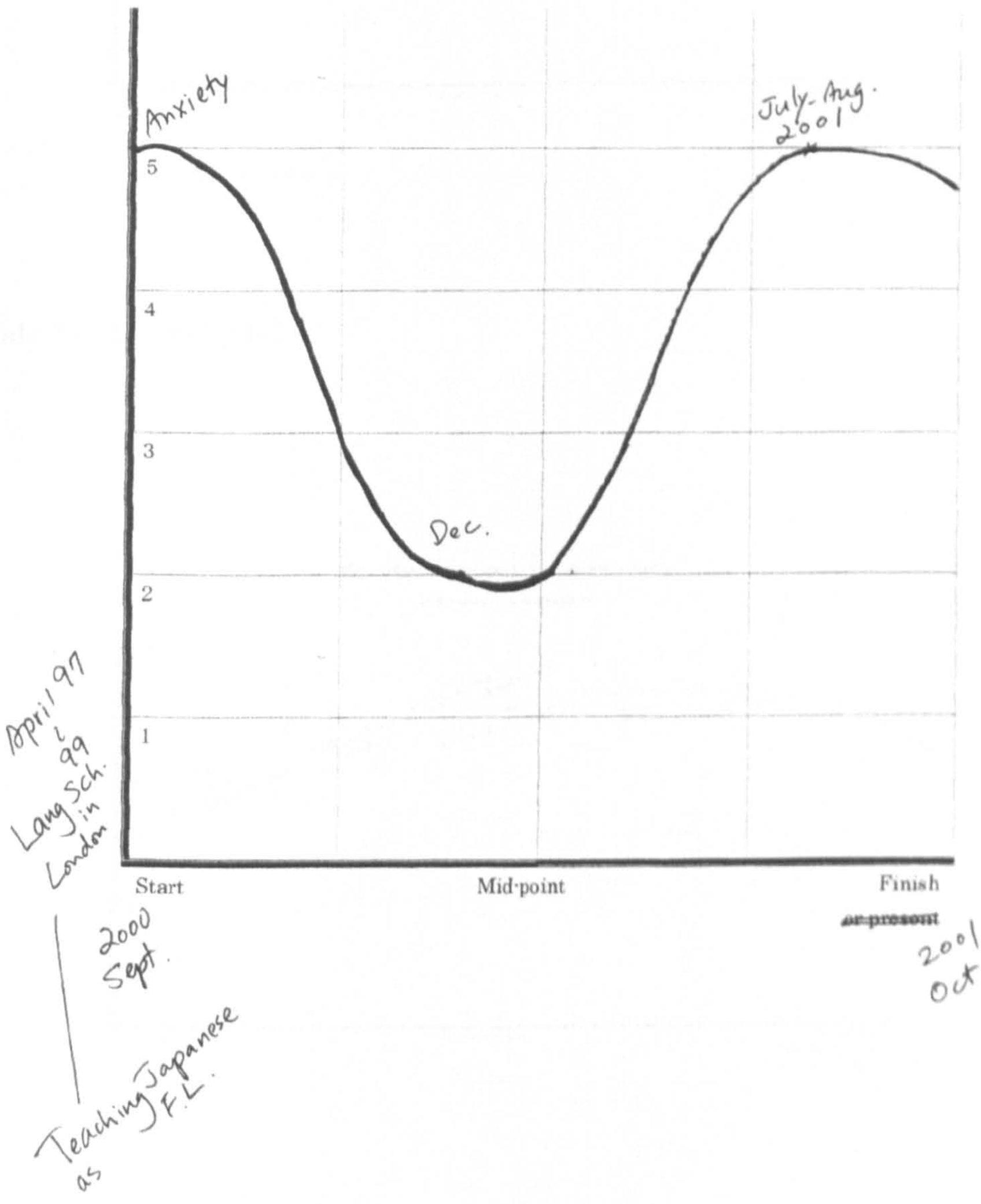


Second MA in Education in History.

Code No. 12 YO94

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph

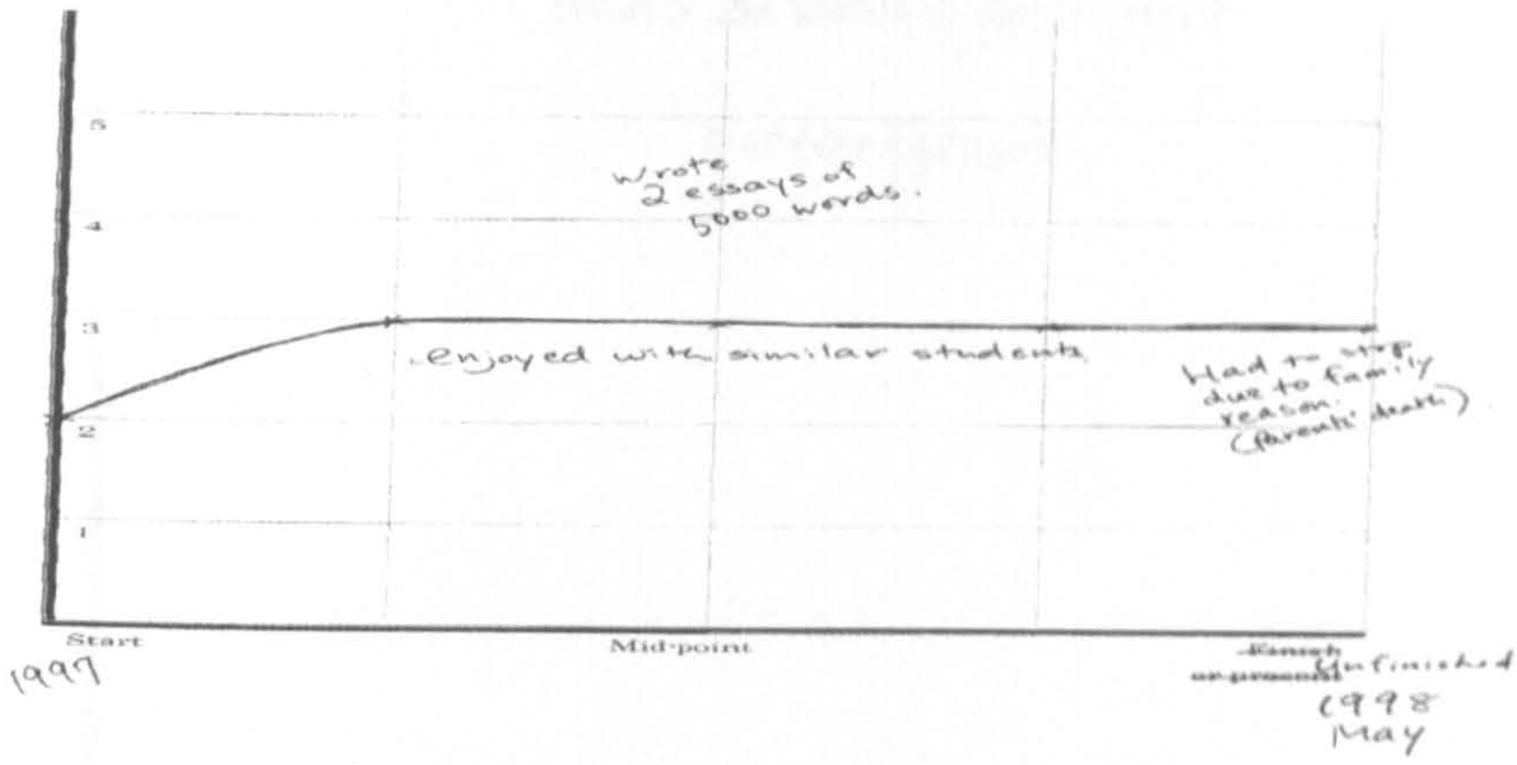


Code No. 13 NM251-1

NM251 — 1

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph

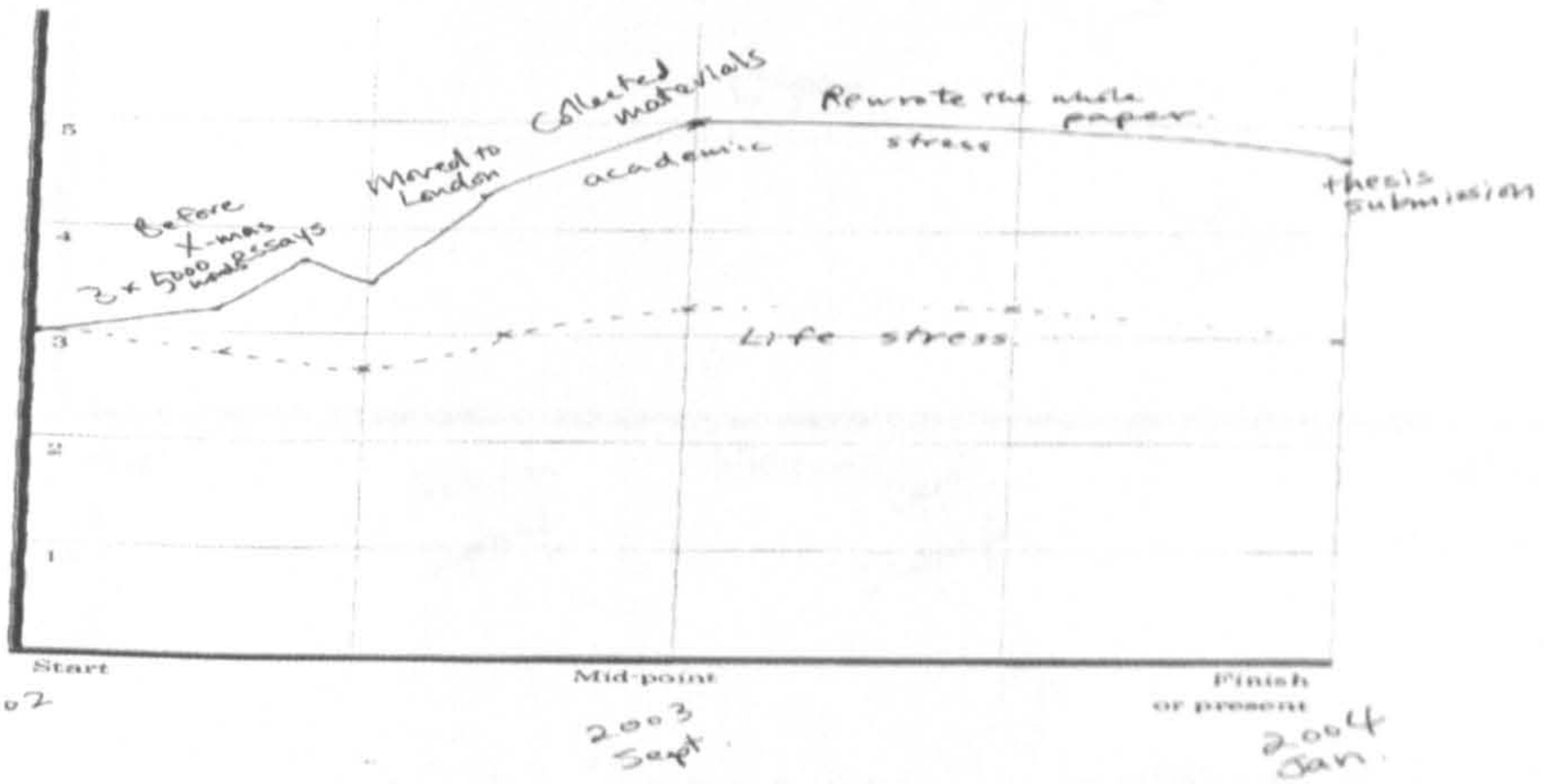


Code No. 13 NM251-2

NM251 — 2

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



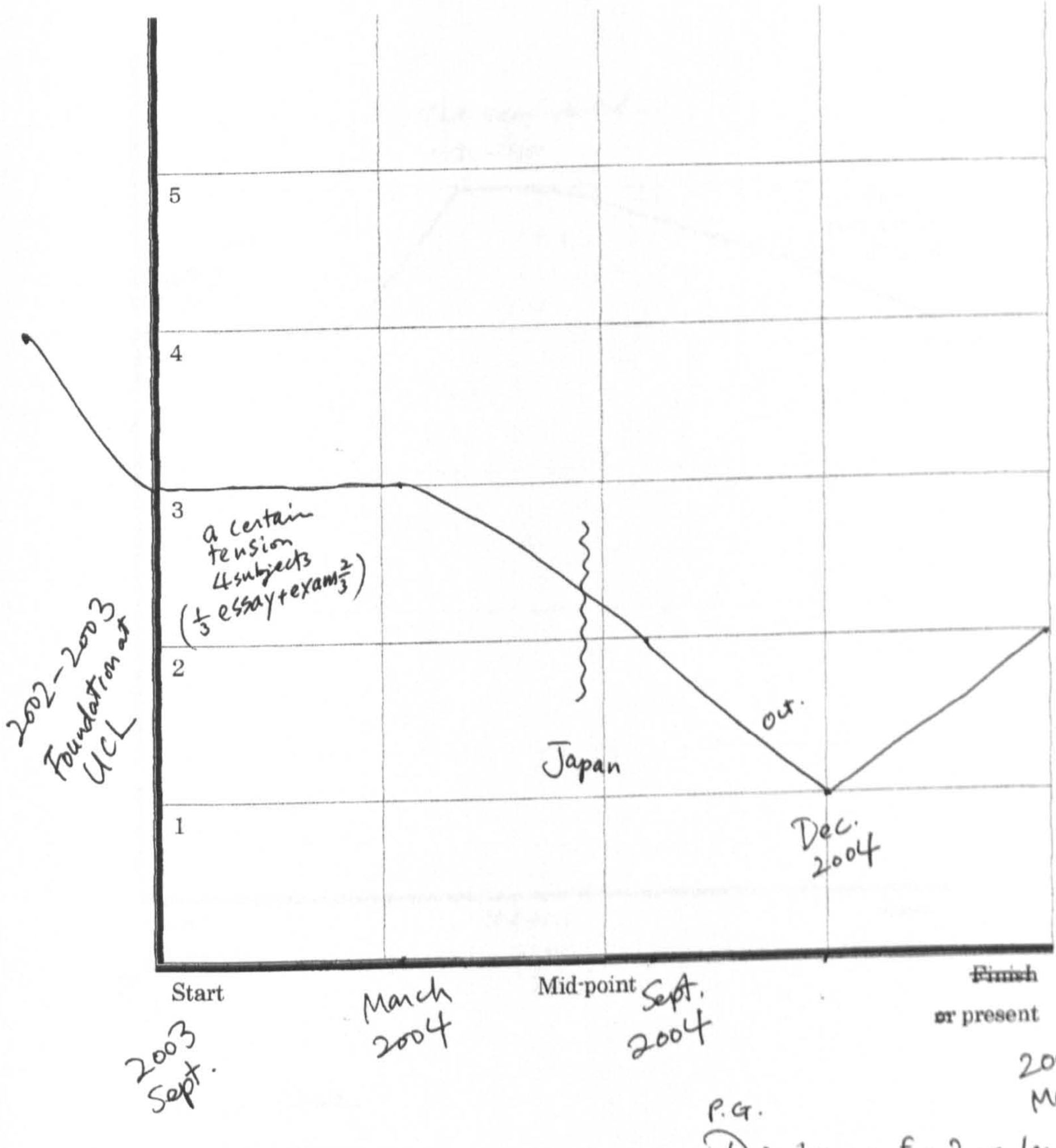
Code No. 14 KNX4~

14

KNX4

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



P.G.

Economics. Diploma for 2 yrs leading to MA after 05.

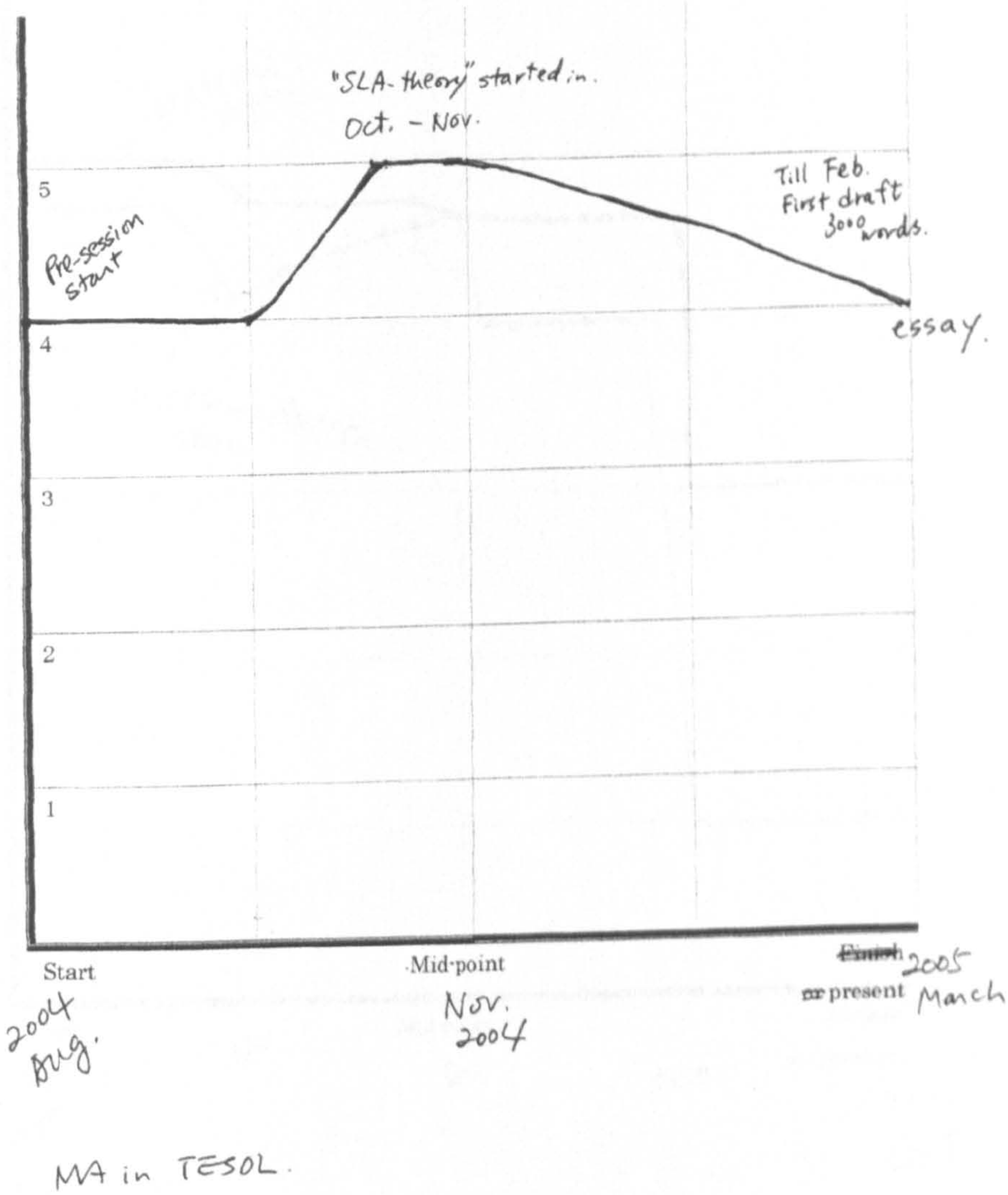
Group v. (MA~ in Apl.L)

Code No. 15 RAX1~

RAX1

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



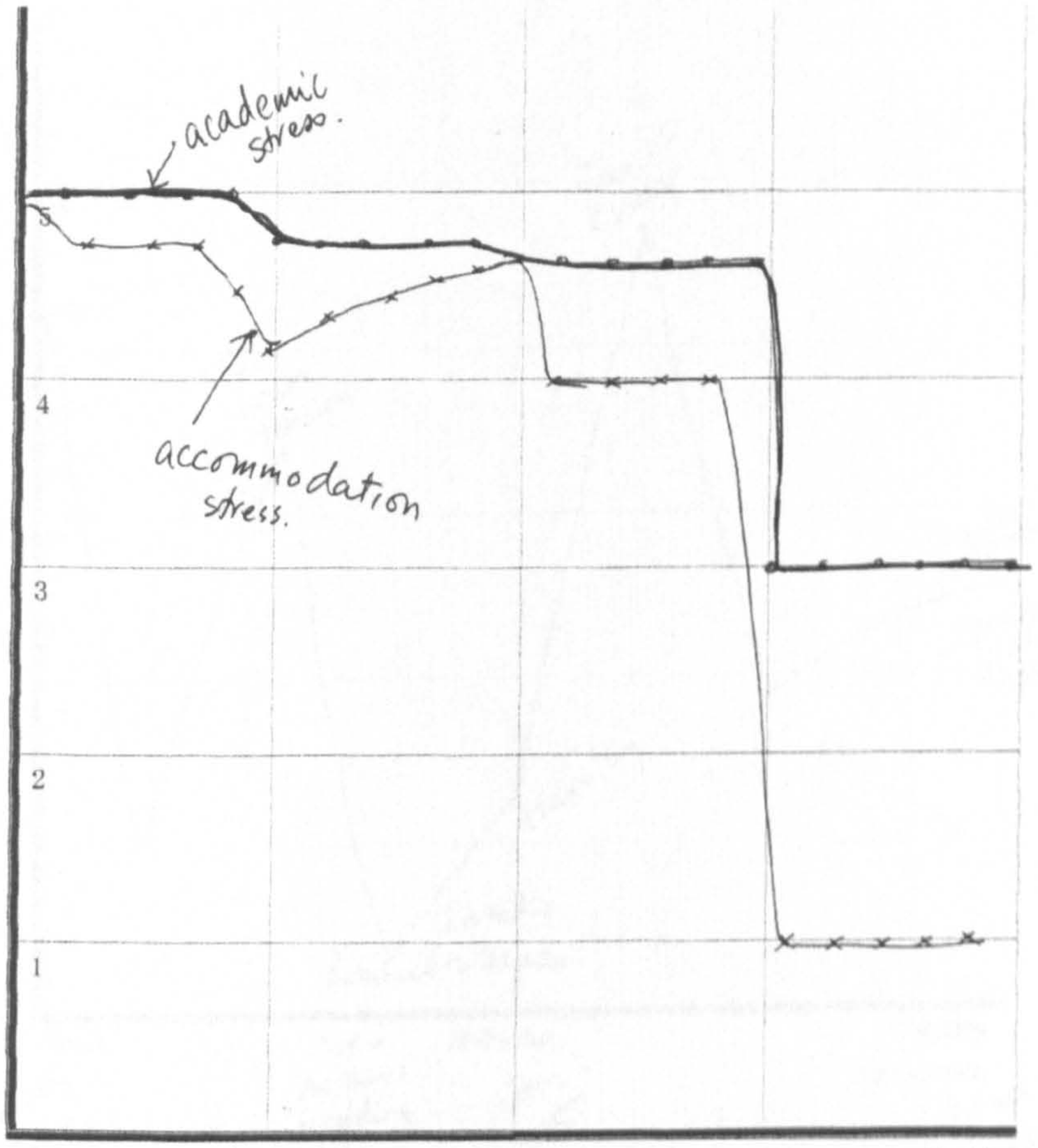
MA in TESOL.

Code No. 16 AMX7~

AMX7

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph

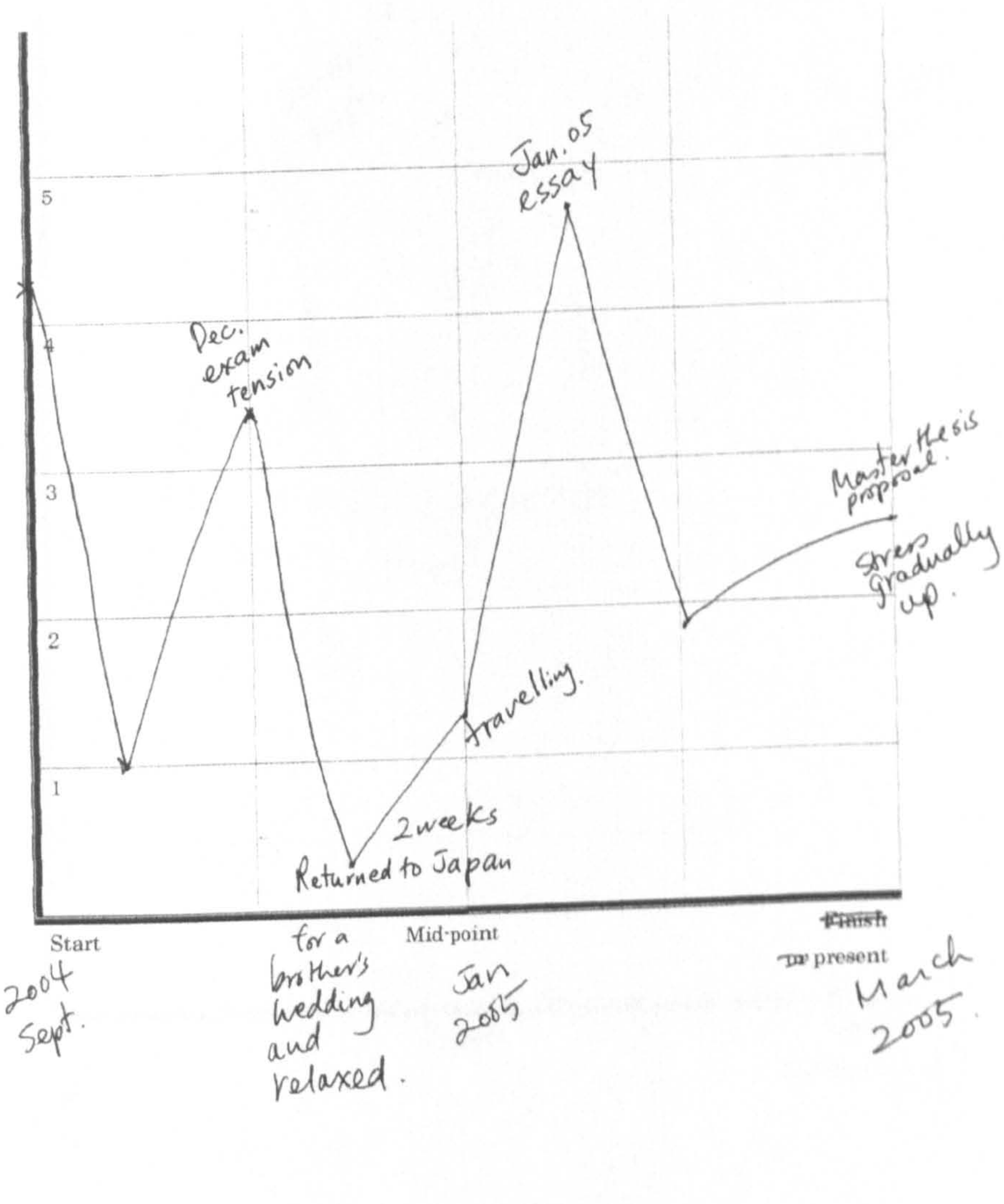


Code No. 17 MYX8~

MYX8

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph

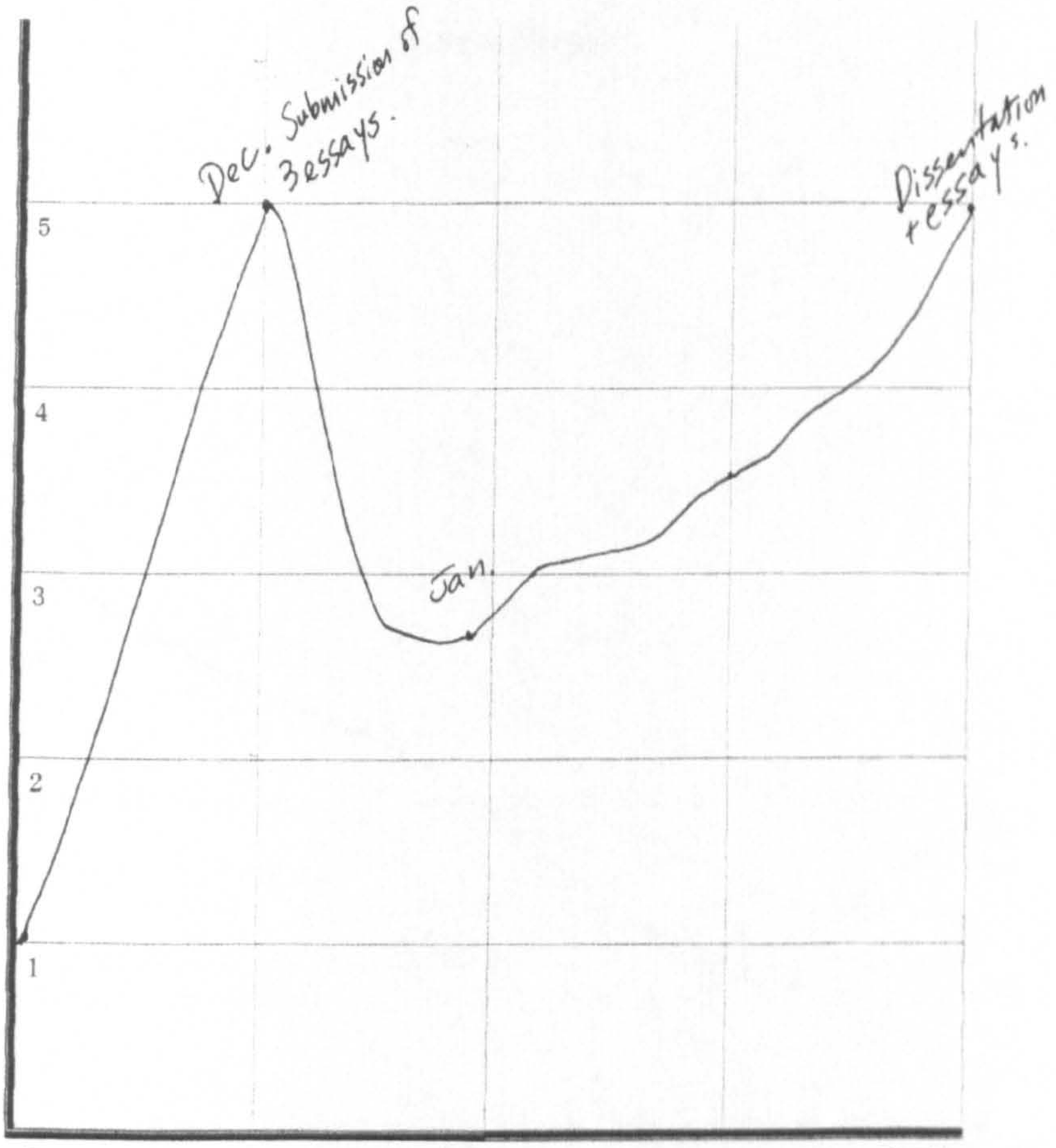


Code No. 18 CSX9~

CSX9

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph

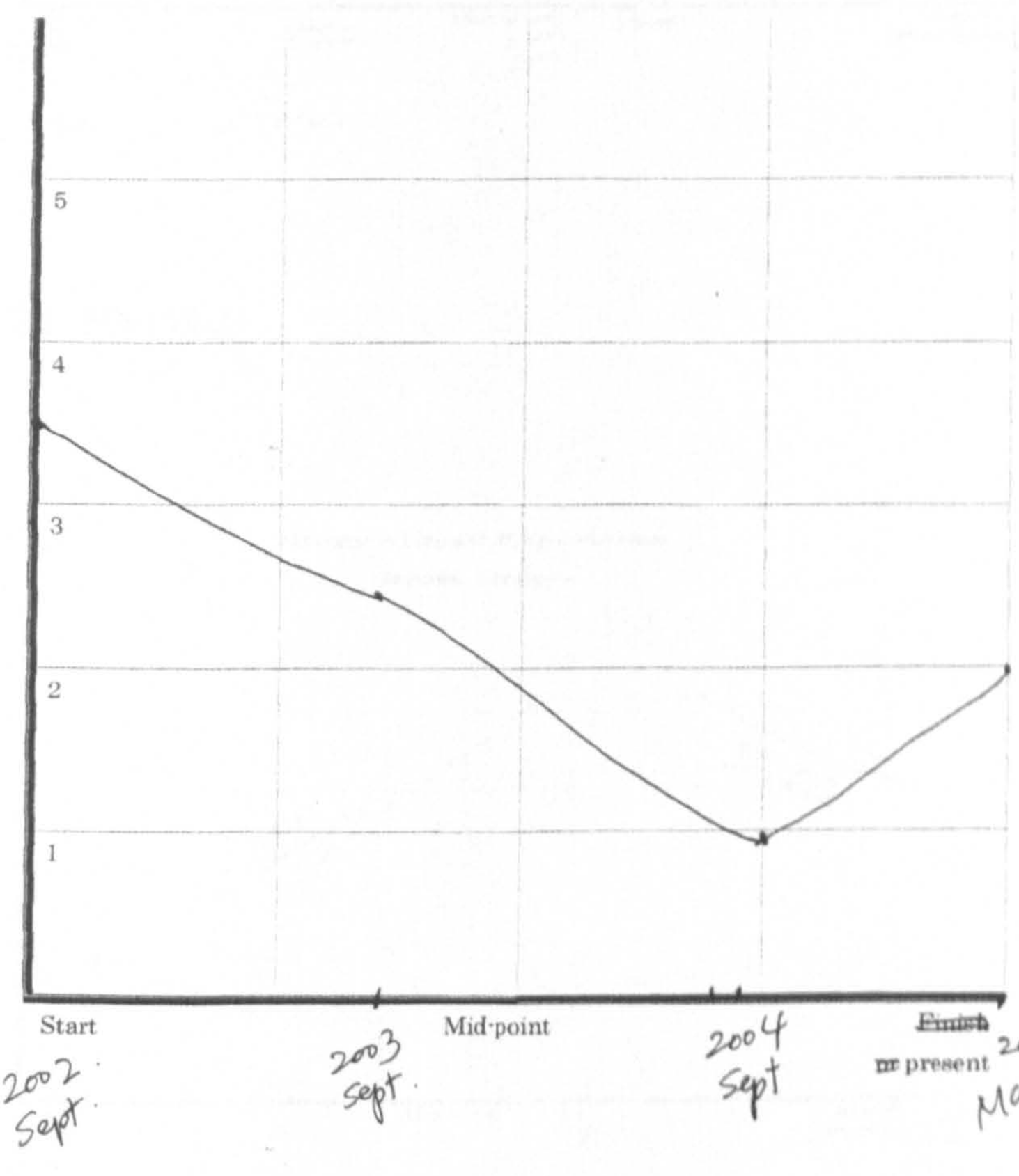


Group VI. (PhD in Linguistics)

Code No. 19 HA224~

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph

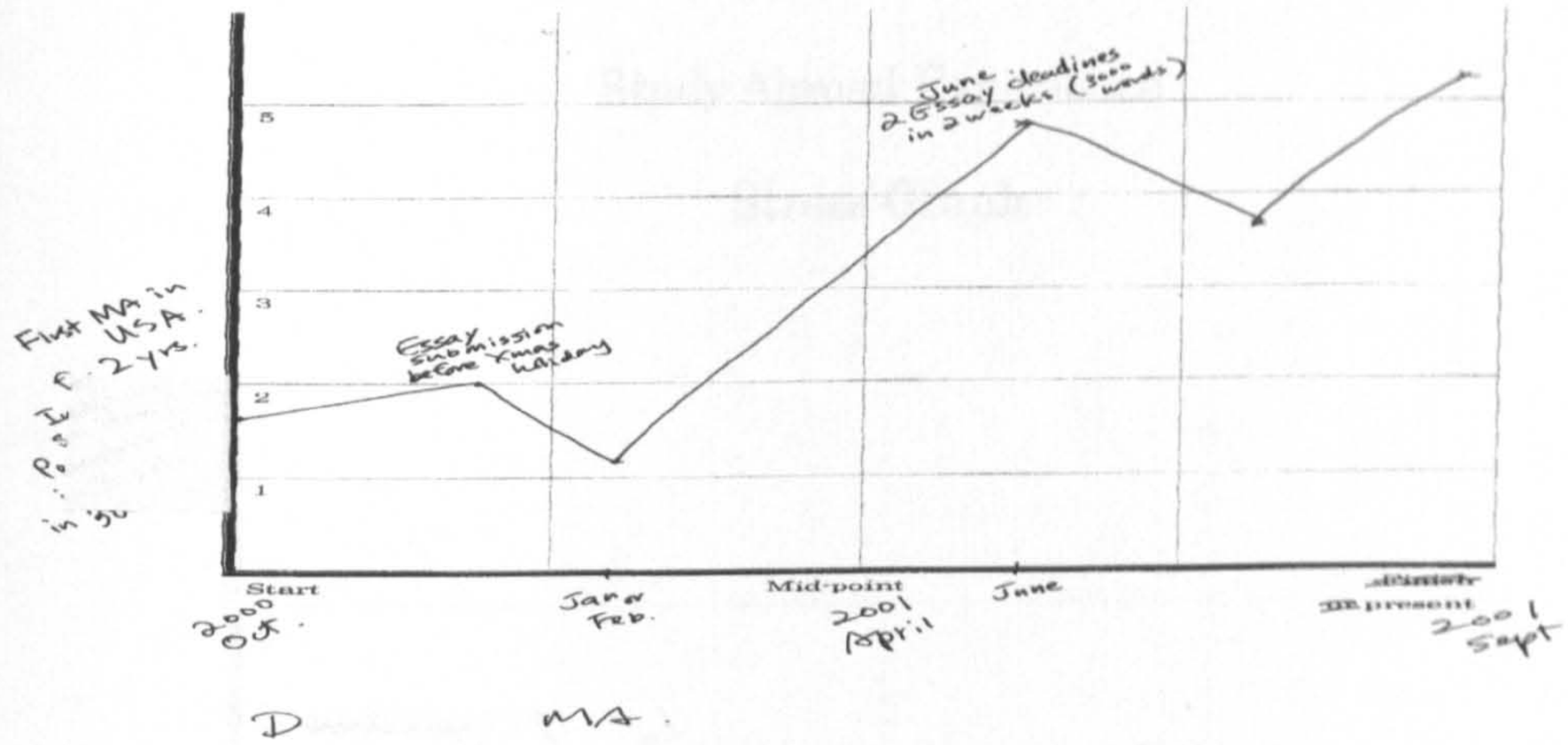


Code No. 20 HN153-1

HN153 — 1

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph

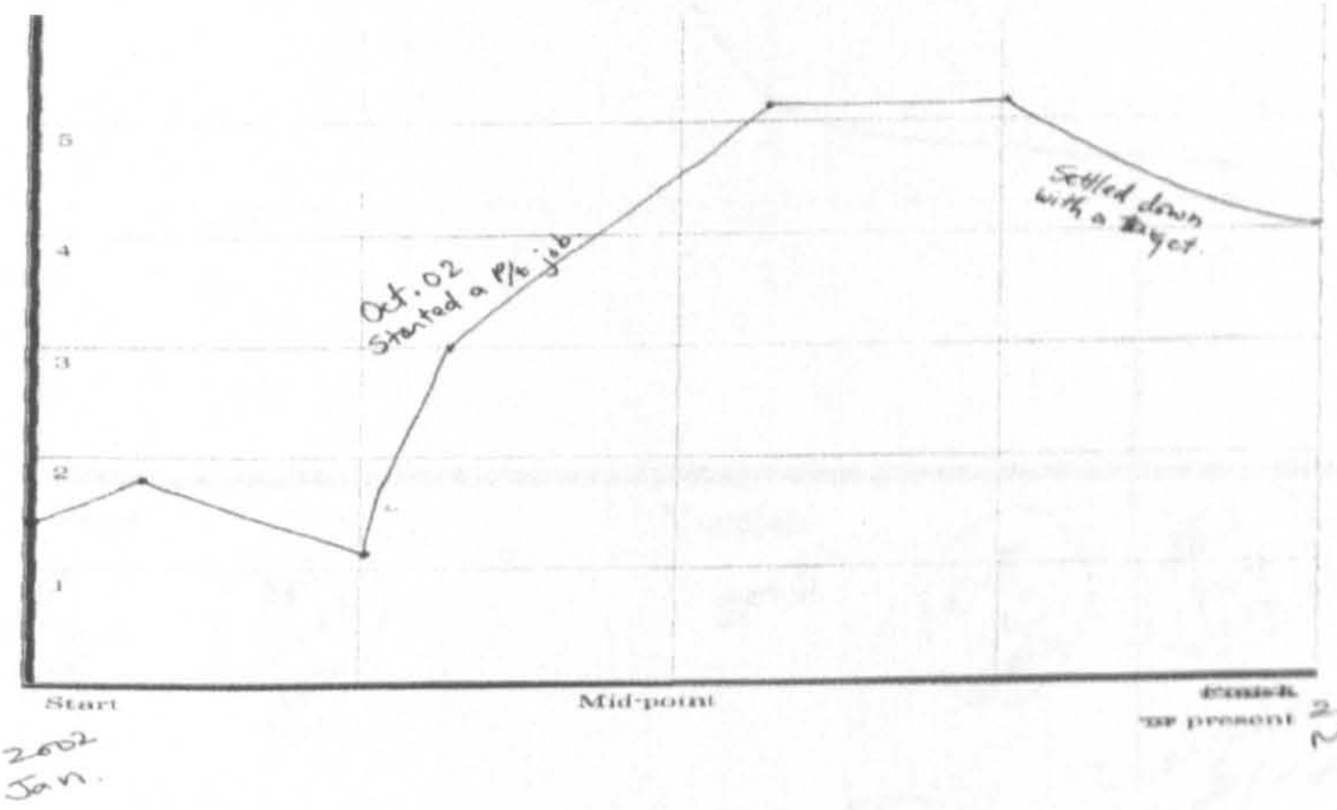


Code No. 20 HN153-2~

HN153 — 2

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



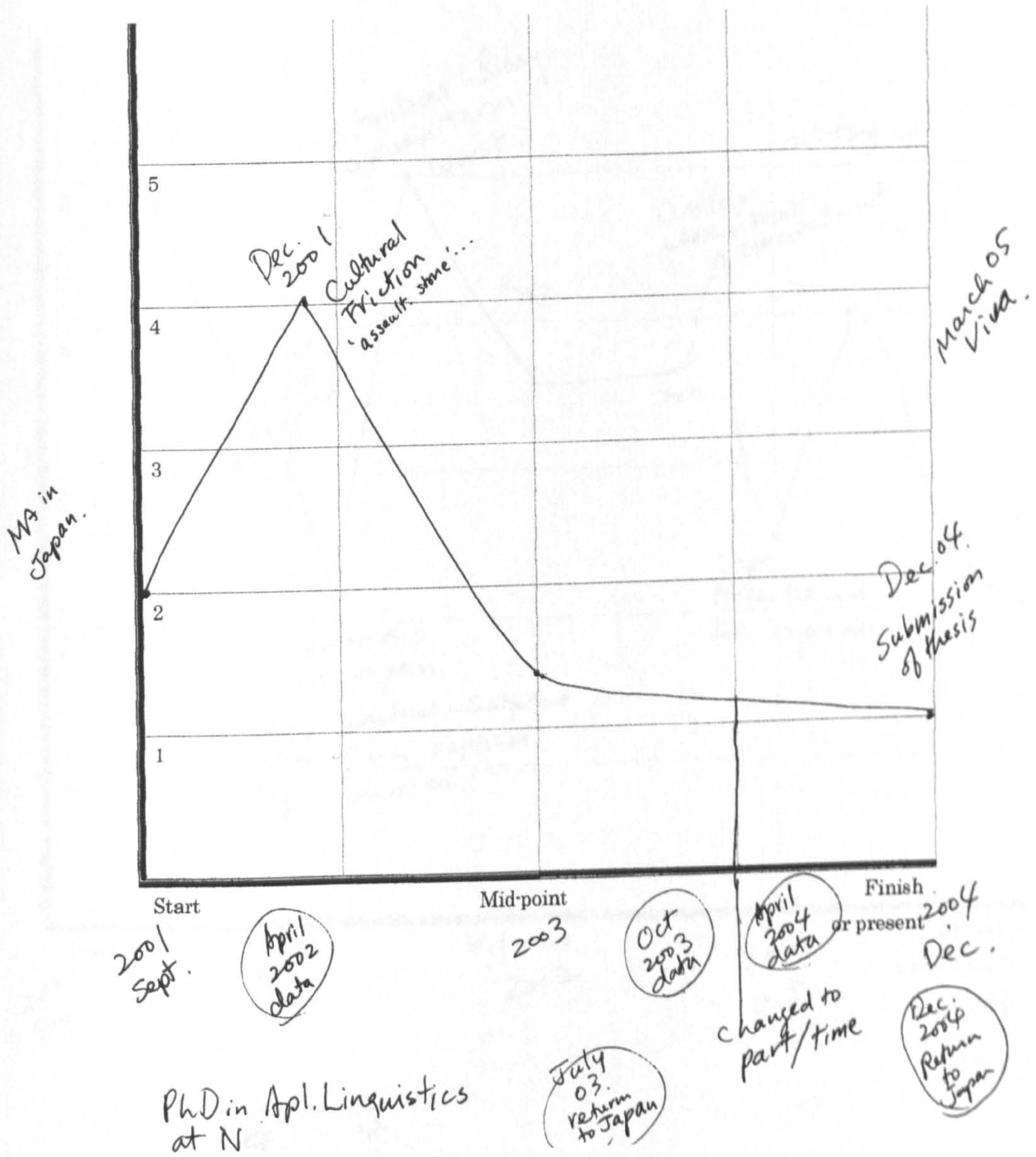
Code No. 21 TI150

21

TI150

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



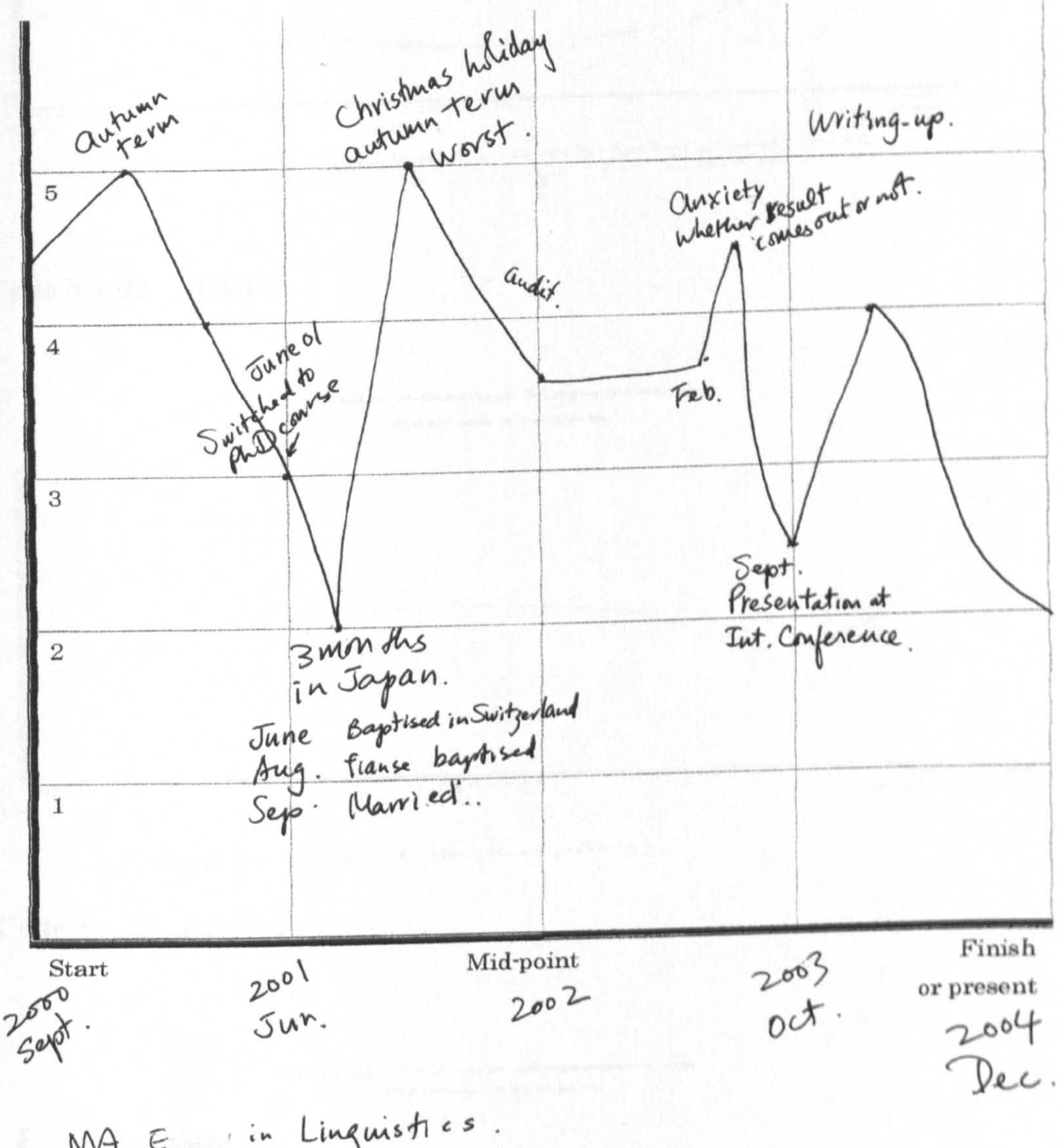
Code No. 22 KY214

2

KY214

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph

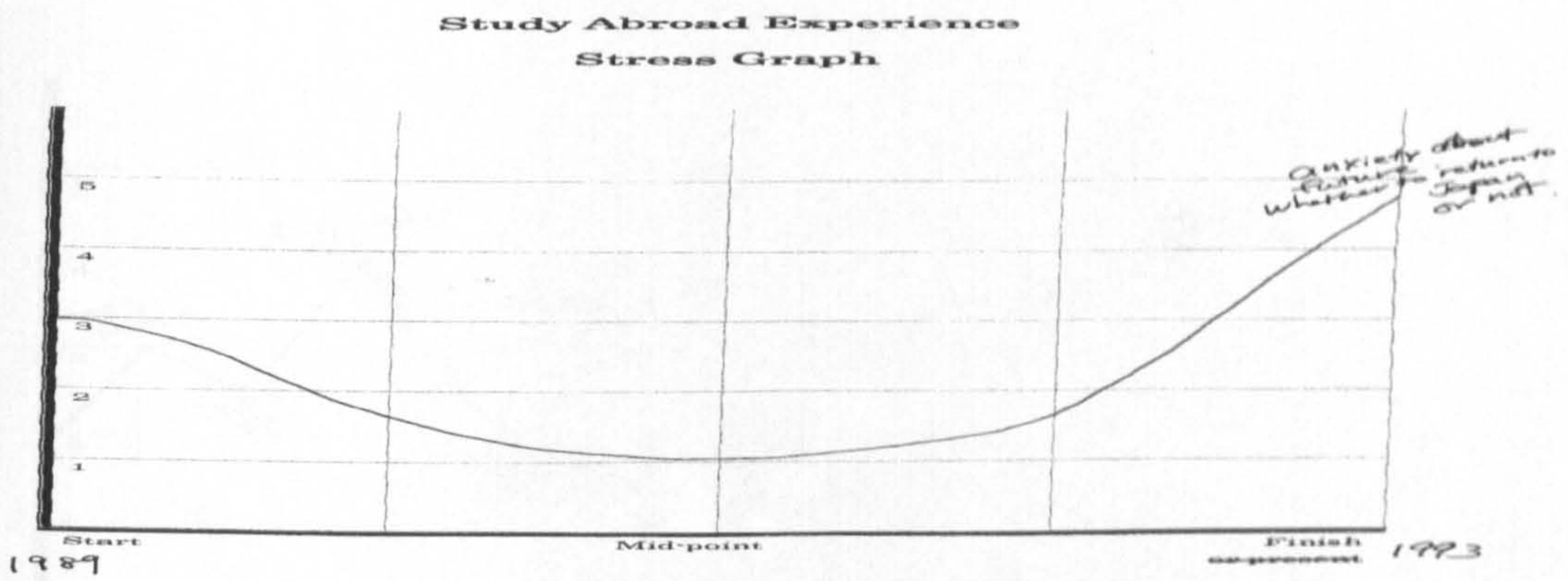


MA E in Linguistics.

Group VII. (PhD)

Code No. 23 AI184-1

AI184 — 1

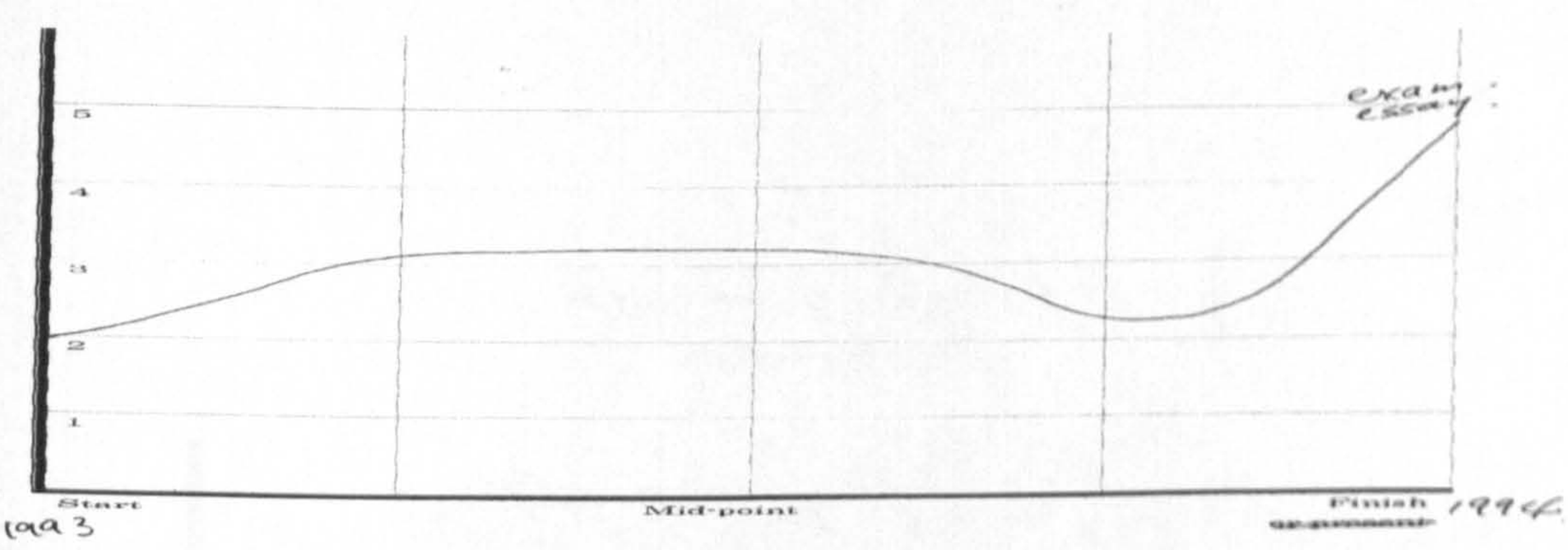


Double BA in Anthropology and Art.
R ge in London.

Code No. 23 AI184-2

23

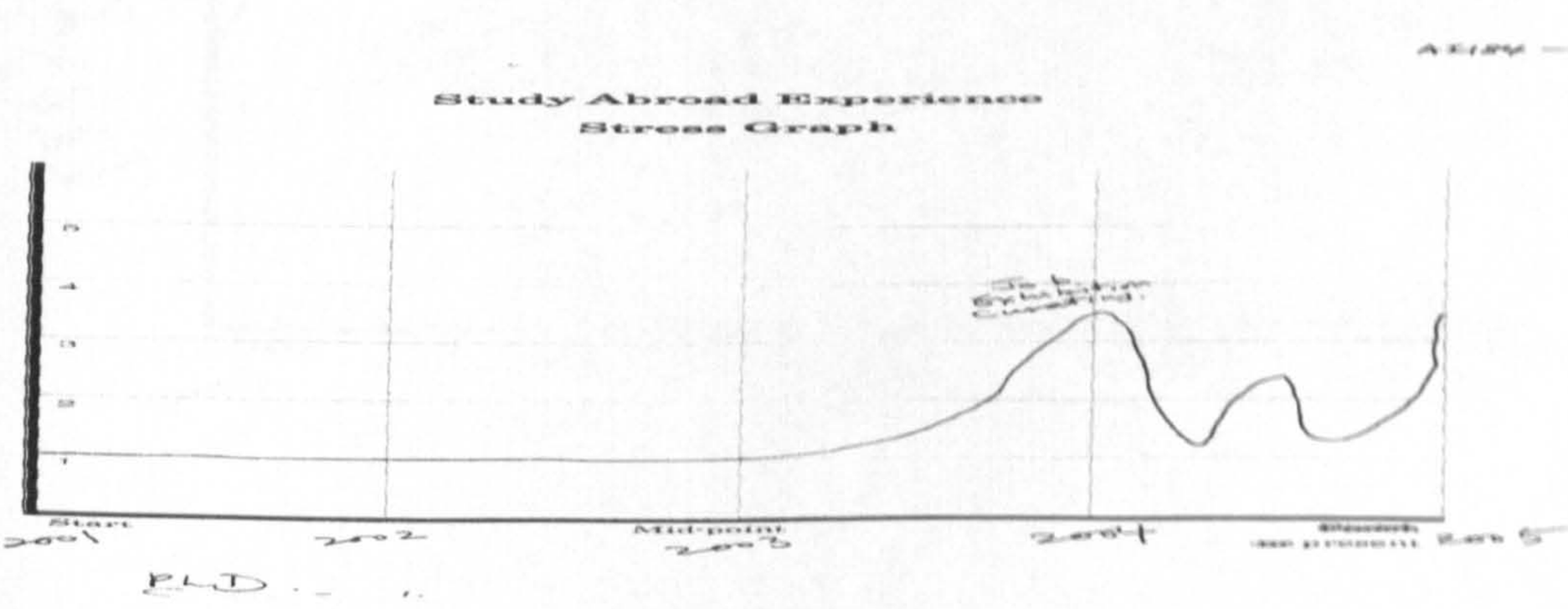
AI184 — 2



MA in Social Anthropology
at S

Code No. 23 AI184-3~

AI184 — 3



PhD . . .

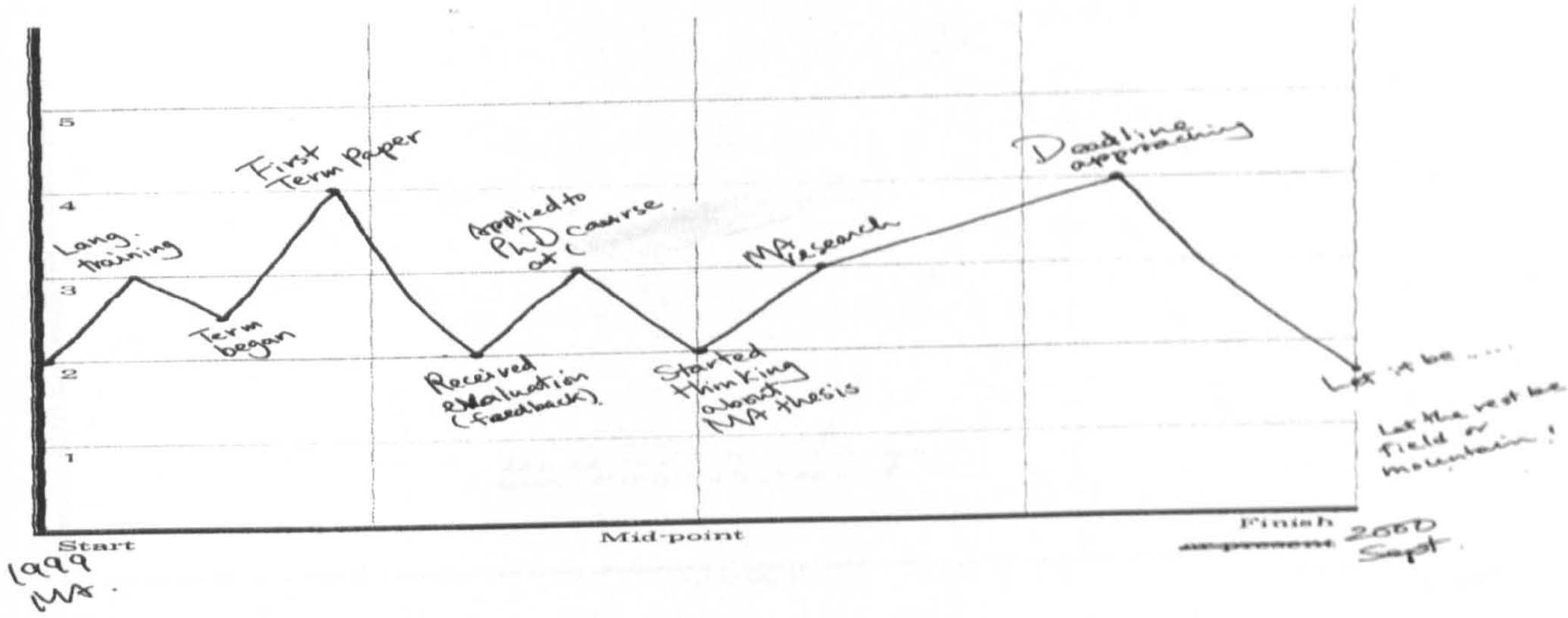
Code No. 24 ET159-1

24

ET159—1

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



MA in Anthropology

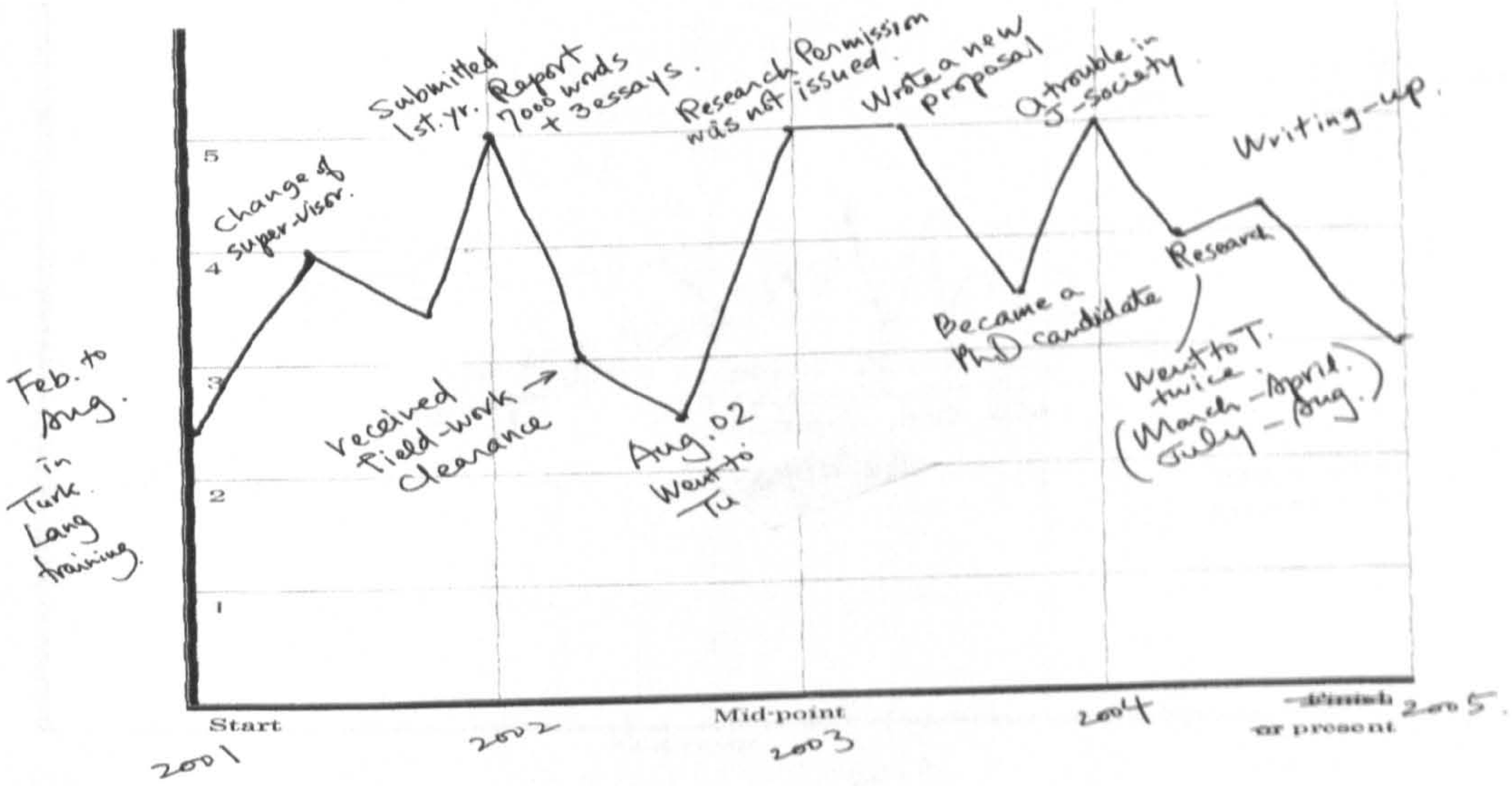
Code No. 24 ET159-2~

24

ET159 — 2

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph

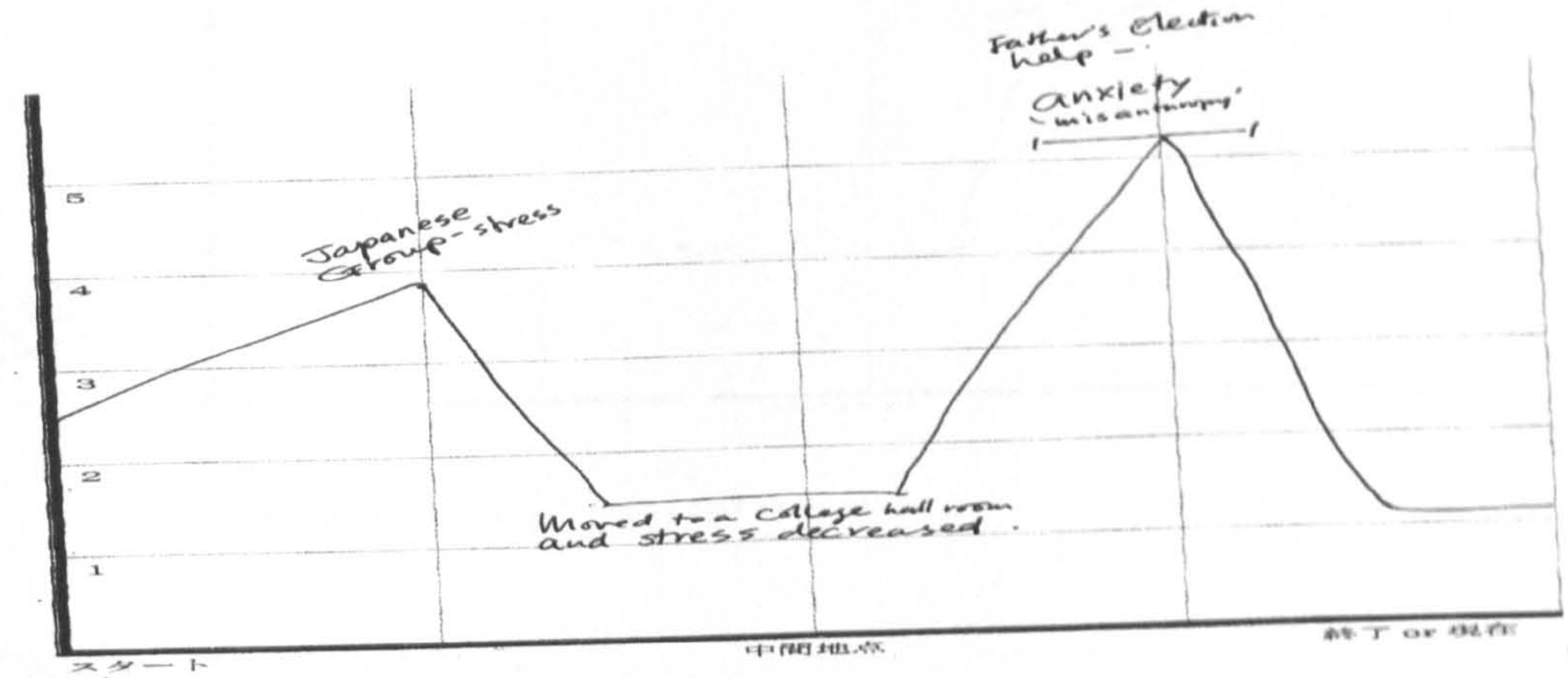


Code No. 25 AY151-1

25

AY151 – 1

留学体験ストレスグラフ



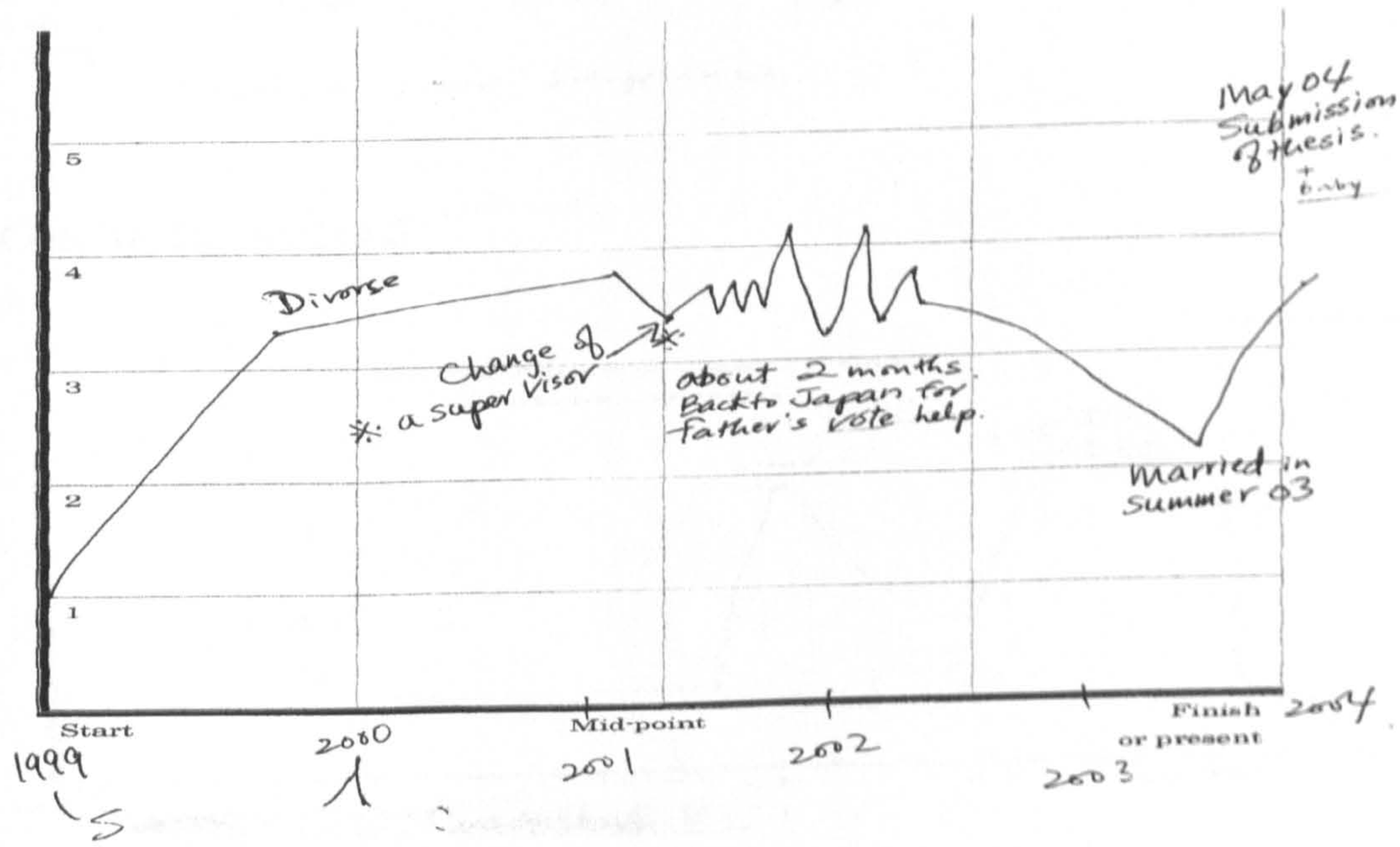
Code No. 25 AY151-2

25

AY151 – 2

Study Abroad Experience

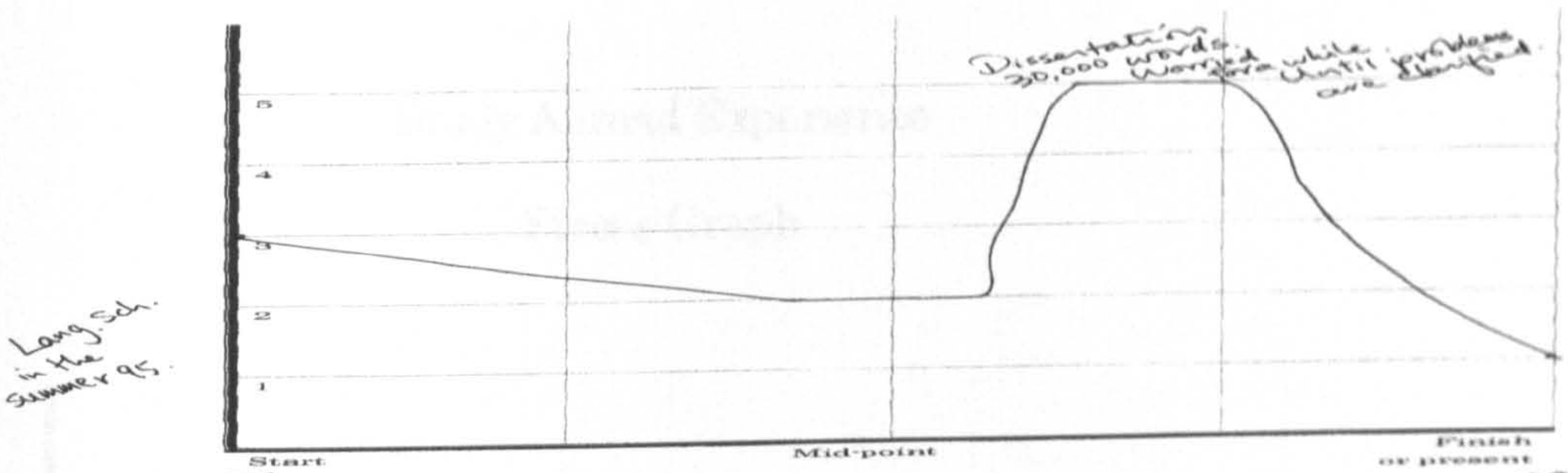
Stress Graph



Code No. 26 NO248-1

NO248 — 1

Study Abroad Experience
Stress Graph

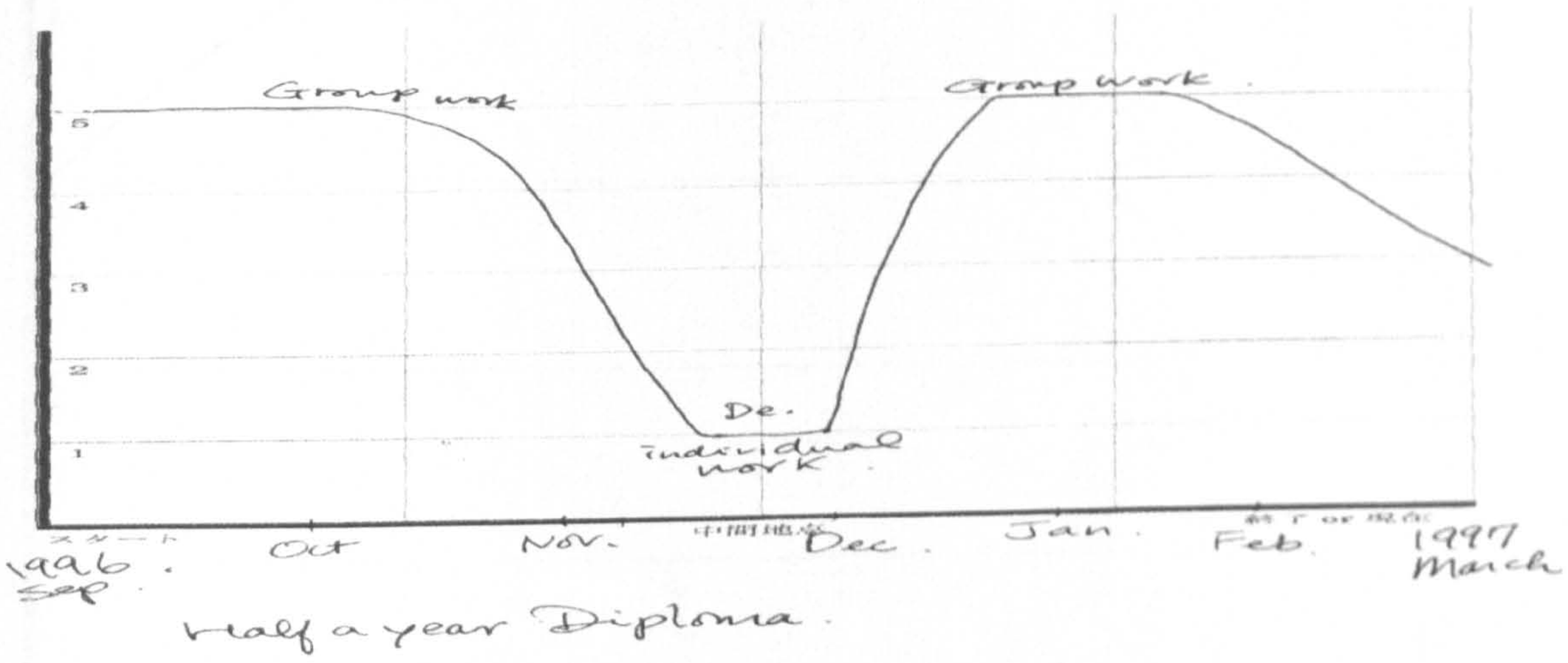


Long. Sch.
in the
Summer 95.

1995
Sep:

MA in Architecture

Code No. 26 NO248-2

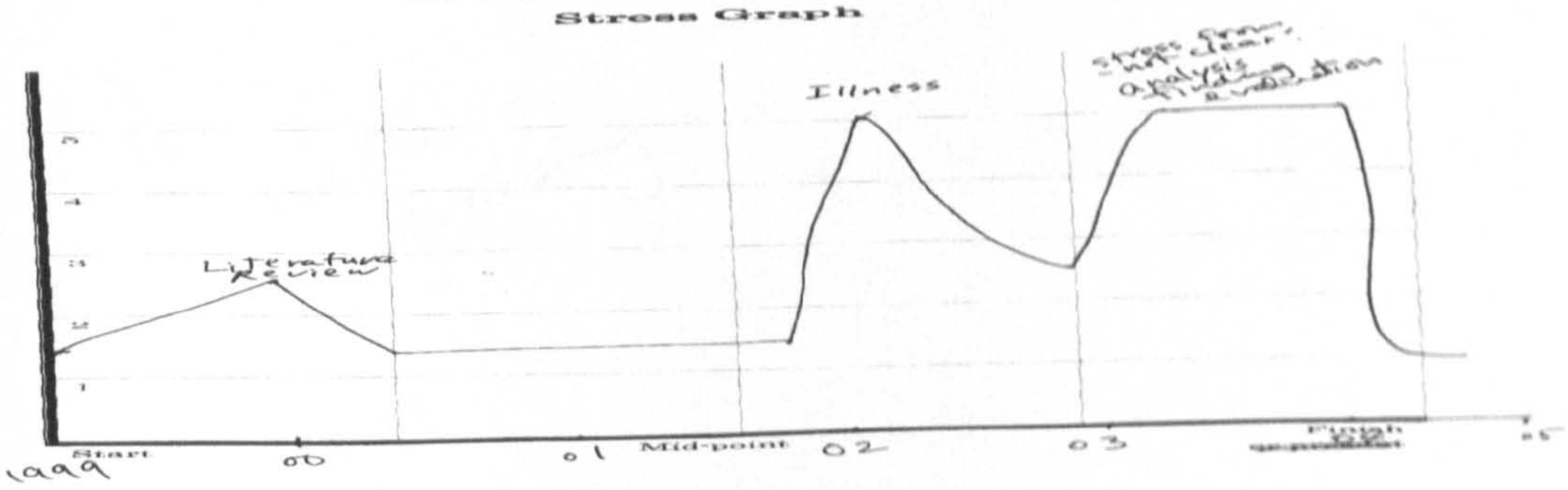


Half a year Diploma.

Code No. 26 NO248-3

NO248 — 3

Study Abroad Experience
Stress Graph



PhD at
Urban Design.

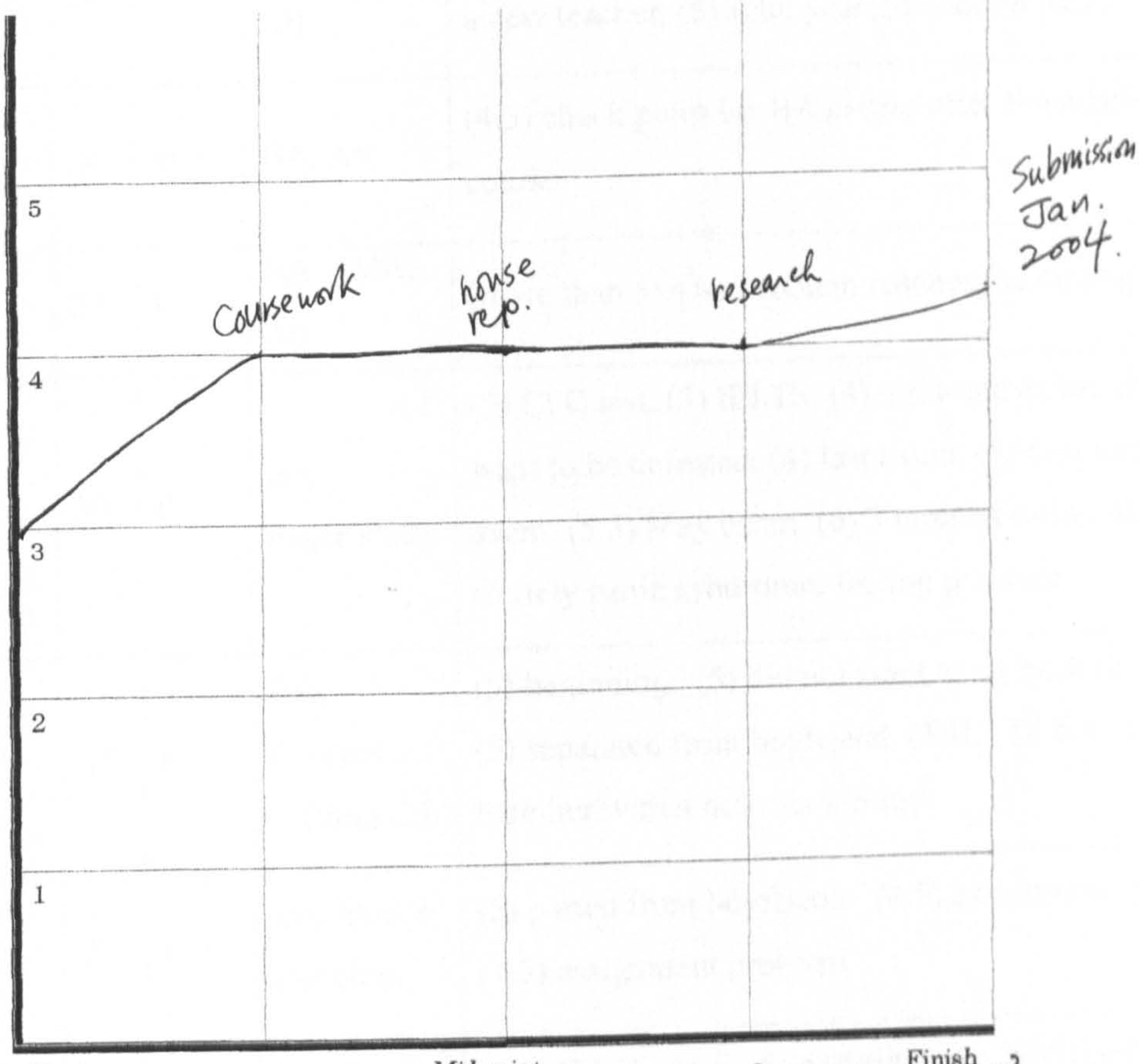
Code No. 27 MK160

27

MK160

Study Abroad Experience

Stress Graph



St
Lt C
Control Theory in Engineering.

(3) All stress peak reasons (from stress / time graph data)

Number	age	male/ female	Course level and field of study	Stress peak reasons (Figures in brackets show perceived stress score.)
1	26	f	BA, Art	(5) BA 2nd year, worried about visa + mismatch with a new teacher, (5) final year graduation paper
2	26	m	BA, Art	(4.3) check point for BA course after Foundation course
3	27	f	BA + MA, Art	(more than 5) visa problem reaches the ceiling!
4	30	f	BA Peace study	(3) CFC test, (3) IELTS, (4) term-end exam, did not want to be defeated, (4) last exam, (5) first term-end exam, (5.5) May exam, (6) 3 months eating disorder, anxiety panic syndrome, feeling pressure
5	23	f	BA, Psychol. + Child Ed.	(5) beginning, (5) did not want to go back to Japan, (5) separated from boyfriend (5)IELTS 6.5, living together with a new boyfriend
6	23	f	BA. Bus. + Develop.	(5) parted from boyfriend (4.5) assignment problem (4.5) assignment problem
7	23	f	BA, Bus.+ Psychology	(4.5) IELTS (4.5 - 5) part-time job, boyfriend trouble, weather, insomnia, coursework
8	22	m	BA, Sports Rehab.	(4.5-5) noisy hall problem, very stressful, guitar at midnight
9	21	m	BA, Archi-tecture	(4) tension, loneliness (5) GCSE exams (5) A-level exams, (5) every term-end requirements (essay +exams)
10	25	m	BA + MA, Engin..	(5) anxiety for future (5) thesis deadline the following week

11	36	f	2 MAs in TESOL + History	(3.4) December examination (3.5) two essays (4.8) dissertation
12	39	f	MA, Lang. Teaching	(5) anxiety at the beginning (5) at the end of the course, language stress for thesis writing and reading speed
13	68	f	MA, History of Women	(5) collecting materials for thesis, stress from re-writing the whole paper
14	35	m	Diploma, Economics	(4) course undecided (3) a certain tension with 4 subjects (essay + exams)
15	32	f	MA, TESOL	(4) pre-session start (5) a new subject started when writing an essay for earlier subject.
16	40	f	MA, Lang. Teaching	(5-4.8) academic stress (5-4.2-4.5) accommodation stress
17	26	f	MA, Lang. Teaching	(4.2) tension at the start ((3.5) Dec exam tension (4.7) Jan. essay
18	35	f	MA, Lang. Teaching	(5) Dec. submission of three essays (5) dissertation + essays
19	29	f	PhD, Linguistics	(3.5) slight tension at the beginning
20	44	f	MA + PhD Linguistics	(4.8) two essays in 2 weeks (3000 words) (5.2) MA dissertation (5.2) part-time job problem, then uncertainty about the research, after that settled down with clearer target

21	27	f	PhD, Linguistics	(4) cultural friction (assault, stone thrown at me.)
22	31	f	MA + PhD Linguistics	(5) term end essay (5) autumn term worst (4.5) anxiety whether result comes out well or not (4) writing up stress at home in Japan (husband's attitude)
23	38	m	BA, MA, PhD, Art + Anthro-pology	(4.8) anxiety about future (whether to return to Japan or not) (4.8) at the end of MA course (exam + essays) (3.5) job + exhibition curator's job stress
24	28	m	MA + PhD, Anthro-pology	(3) language training (4) first term paper (3) application to PhD course (4) MA thesis deadline approaching (4) change of supervisor (5) submission of first year report (5) research permission is not issued, writing new proposal (5) a trouble in students society
25	32	f	MA + PhD, English . Literature	(3.8) stress from Japanese students group (5.2) anxiety, misanthropy, (3.5) divorce (3.5) change of a supervisor (4) 2 month return to Japan to help father's election (3.5) submission of thesis, baby
26	39	f	MA, PhD, Diploma , Urban Design	(5) MA dissertation worried until anxiety or uncertainty is solved. (5) group work assignment twice (2.5) literature review (5) illness (5) stress from uncertainty, analysis of findings and evaluation
27	35	m	PhD, Engin.	(4) - (4.2) coursework, house rep. Research submission of thesis